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**SAME-SEX
MARRIAGE**

Legislating the bedroom
PG. 8

HARD TRUTHS

Thornton Dial at the IMA
PG. 18

OSCARS

Ed makes his predictions
PG. 24

BETAL

Dance-rock band
finishes long-awaited
debut album

by Paul F.P. Pogue

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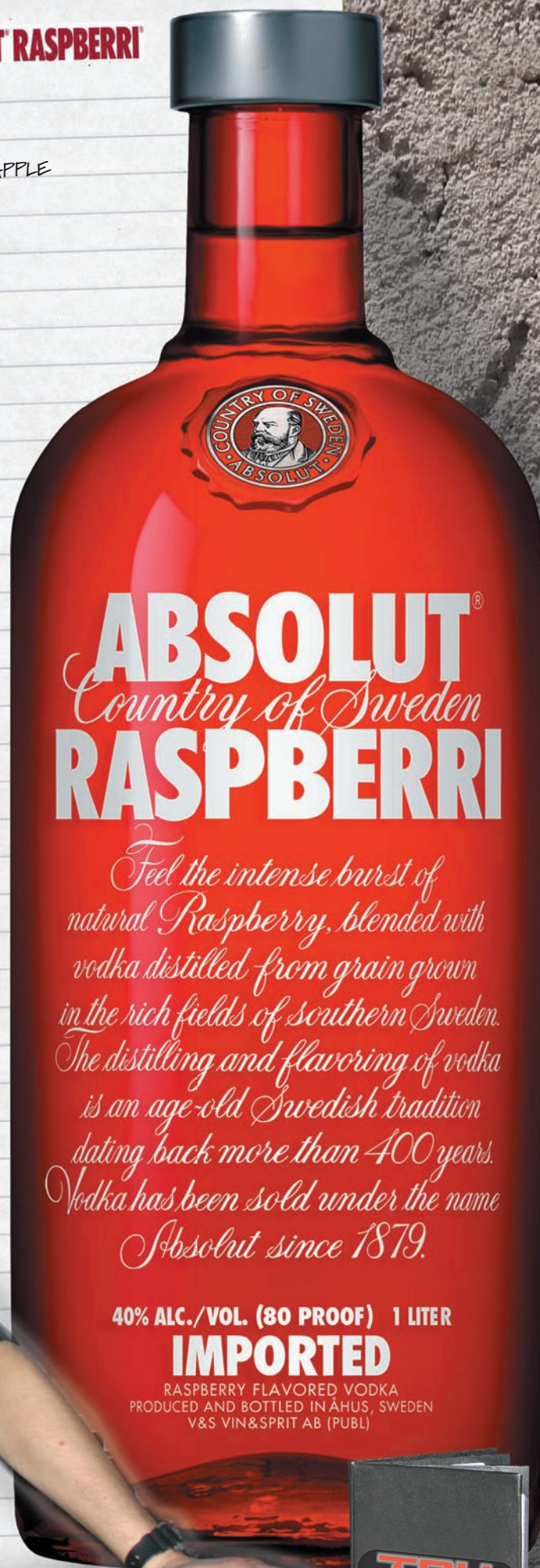
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THIS WEEK

FEB. 23- MAR. 2, 2011

VOL. 21 ISSUE 53 ISSUE #1028

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DANCE SLOWLY: BETA MALE'S MIRRORBALL WORLD

With the release of their first full-length album, Beta Male has come full-circle in band identity, dropping the Day-Glo and taking an introspective look at their journey as a band. The dance-rock band is coming to Radio Radio on Friday, Feb. 25.

BY PAUL F. POGUE

COVER PHOTO BY PAUL F. POGUE

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INDIANA'S ASSAULT ON GAY MARRIAGE

Equality took a major blow last week when the Indiana House of Representatives took the first step towards making its gay marriage laws some of the harshest in the nation.

BY TYLER FALK

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EPIC BEAUTY AND MYSTERY: THORNTON DIAL

In a 20-year retrospective exhibit titled *Hard Truths: The Art of Thornton Dial*, the southern artist poignantly deals with issues such as race and class struggle. The exhibit opens Feb. 25 at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

BY DAVID HOPPE

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OSCARS 2011

It's Oscar time again. Ed predicts with whom the top prizes of the night will be going home, and also presents who he wishes would be taking them home instead.

BY ED JOHNSON-OTT

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Correction

A table of contents description published in last week's issue incorrectly stated that "Right to Work" legislation would make it illegal for employees to join a union at a unionized company." Correctly stated, "Right to Work" legislation would guarantee an employee's right not to join a union and would make illegal any contract requiring union membership as a condition of employment.



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HAMMER



The real majority

Should we take it to the streets?

STEVE HAMMER
SHAMMER@NUVO.NET

The news from America has been dominated by the right-wing coup currently underway in Wisconsin, where teachers and other government workers have been threatened with their jobs because the governor wants to reduce costs. The workers and their sympathizers have been protesting in the streets, pursued by pro-government activists attempting to drown them out.

Tea Party zealots, fueled by propaganda television and radio broadcasts, have been bussed in from around the nation to quell the protesters. The zealots have been trying to disrupt the peaceful protesting in Wisconsin and export their views to other states.

If it sounds a bit like the situation in Egypt, Libya and the kingdoms of the Middle East, it's not coincidental. The rough outline is the same: A bullying government trying to enforce radical policies and drown out objections with proxy goons.

Despite the president's trying to mediate an end to this assault on organized labor, the Wisconsin government is unyielding in its stand against education and educators, and for the right of the wealthy to pay as little in taxes as it possibly can, no matter what the costs.

The right-wing media, just like the government in Egypt, had better be careful when inciting the masses to protest in the streets. If a real majority of Americans grabbed picket signs and gathered in protest, the right-wingers would be surprised just who would show up.

It wouldn't be Fox News viewers from the suburbs filling Monument Circle in protest; if the true will of the people were expressed in the streets, it would be a mass gathering of poor whites, blacks, Hispanics, young people and gays, all of them united in opposition to state government.

We're actually not too far away from that scenario. Apparently motivated by Mitch Daniels' presidential ambitions and a desire to outdo Arizona and Wisconsin for the title of dumbest legislature, our Statehouse has been a beehive of activity for proposed laws to break our economy even further and to repress minority voices of any kind.

In an ideal world for our legislature, nobody would have collective bargaining rights, all white males would be granted special rights to patrol our cities for illegal aliens, and the very richest among us would pay no taxes at all. This is a scary picture but not too far from reality.

Usually I have no problem with white people wanting to express just how repressed they are because it's usually just a bunch of hillbillies carrying signs and repeating Rush Limbaugh slogans. The difference is, these folks have power on a scale sufficient enough to harm our country and foster violent disagreements.

I have a feeling that if they had their way, the Tea Party would impeach the president and vice president, outlaw unions, blacks and homosexuals and restore the country to the Christian values of the slaveowners of the 1800s.

If that happened, there really would be a rebellion in the streets because the vast majority of urban residents these days stand fully behind the president and the legitimately elected government of the United States.

I'm a little too old for rioting in the streets but would gladly participate in a general strike and massive protests against the people who want to repress me and my kind. That's what we're looking at if the right-wing radicals continue to try to roll back our rights in the name of balanced budgets.

Mitch Daniels has been touring the nation and speaking about the miracle of his tenure in Indiana, where he's pawned our state's assets, given rich people tax breaks and tried to undo almost 100 years of progress in collective bargaining.

With the help of the right wing's media, he's starting to build a name for himself as a hard-nosed, pragmatic, rich white man who will help all his fellow rich avoid

paying taxes and bear no responsibility for helping the neediest citizens.

People are starting to believe this fictional picture. To them, I say, let them come to Indiana. They will see a deeply divided state comprised of reasonable people who don't want this right-wing radicalism.

They will also see citizens who are willing to protest in the streets, if necessary, in order not to be repressed further by the local government.

That's why the right wingers had better exercise caution in organizing these big rallies. Pretty soon now, a real majority of folks will drown out their protests with those of their own. We outnumber the Republicans, the teabaggers and the ultra-rich.

Normally, we're at work, trying to provide for our families. We don't have time to indulge in street protests. But make us angry enough and we'll counter your demonstrations and outdo them. Just don't push us. ■

The right-wing media, just like the government in Egypt, had better be careful when inciting the masses to protest in the streets.



HOPPE

These Republicans ain't no party

The social undoing of Indiana

BY DAVID HOPPE
DHOPPE@NUVO.NET

I used to think there wasn't much difference between Republicans and Democrats in Indiana. "Republicrat" seemed an apt way of describing this state's *genus politicalus*.

That was before Republicans took control of the Statehouse.

In last November's elections, Republicans added six members to their majority in the state Senate. In the House, where Democrats previously held a one-vote advantage, the Republicans really romped, adding 19 seats.

Factor in Republican Governor Mitch Daniels and you have what amounts to one-party rule.

This year's legislative session has been a crash course in what one-party rule — make that Republican Party rule — looks like. In just a few weeks, Republican politicians appear to have set the stage to roll back the 21st Century and deposit Indiana in a time capsule dated 1920-something.

Republicans have gone on a legislative bender. So far, they have put forth a bill aimed at creating a draconian immigration law based on racial profiling. Then there is the proposal to allow people to carry guns and ammunition into a variety of public places, while restricting the ability of communities to regulate guns.

If Republicans have their way, Indiana would have some of the most restrictive abortion laws in the United States, and Planned Parenthood could find its funding to provide reproductive health services to disadvantaged women slashed. A Republican plan to change the way schools are funded would divert public money to private schools, cut funding for urban districts where student enrollments are decreasing, and further accelerate what has clearly become the dismantling of the state's public education system.

And, as if all this weren't enough, Republicans have renewed their campaign to write second-class citizenship into the state's constitution by putting forth a discriminatory amendment that not only bans gay marriage, but refuses to recognize any form of legal partnership, like civil unions, between same-sex couples.

As has been pointed out countless times in the past, Indiana already has a law making gay marriage illegal. That's not good enough for state Republicans. They seem to sense the fundamental unfairness of the law. They know it could be challenged in court and that, someday, a judge might rule it unconstitutional.

So they want to write this unfairness into the constitution itself.

That'll fix those gays. It will be the equivalent of a sign saying "Stay Away!"

What appears to have escaped the state's Republican defenders of heterosexuality is that their insistence on granting privileges to some people, while outlawing those privileges for others, actually makes Indiana appear not virtuous but backward. The Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce has gone on record in opposition to the amendment because its members fear it proclaims Indiana to be intolerant and unwelcoming.

But there's the rub. The state's Republicans could care less what people think in Indianapolis. Indeed, as one reads through this session's legislative checklist, it's hard not to see what amounts to a strong anti-urban bias. Indianapolis has become a significant point of entry for Mexican immigrants. It also has a significant problem with gun violence. Many women are drawn to the city because it affords greater access to reproductive health care than is found in rural communities. And while the city's public school system has seen declining enrollment, it has also been called on to play a greater and more complex role in the lives of the students who remain.

Indianapolis has also become a Democratic political stronghold, as well as an oasis of relative economic prosperity compared with the rest of Indiana. I suspect these characteristics are not lost on Republican legislators whose constituents share a history of mistrust and resentment toward the city.

Republican politicians appear to have set the stage to roll back the 21st century.

The feeling that Indianapolis somehow profits at a cost to the rest of the state has been an article of bad faith in outlying communities for years. This prejudice has probably been exacerbated by Indiana's overall lack of economic vitality. This year's Republican obsession with social legislation reflects that party's basic inability to actually do anything

about creating jobs or truly improving the state's feeble economy.

It also speaks to Gov. Daniels' lack of leadership. It's ironic that the governor's presidential *bona fides* are being touted by national pundits at the very moment legislators in his own party appear to be rolling him. Whatever else Daniels may be, he is a businessman. Surely he knows that his party's obsessions with immigration, women's reproductive rights and gay rights are not only wasting valuable time that could be spent on local government reforms, but are painting Indiana into a competitive corner in relation to other states.

Daniels spent significant time and money campaigning for Republicans in the months leading up to November's election. He wanted to make sure he got the majorities that now hold sway in the Statehouse. That he has yet to call in his markers, to impose some semblance of discipline on what, so far, has been a runaway train, makes him either impotent or complicit in what will be remembered as the social undoing of Indiana by his party and his party alone — the state's Republicans. ■

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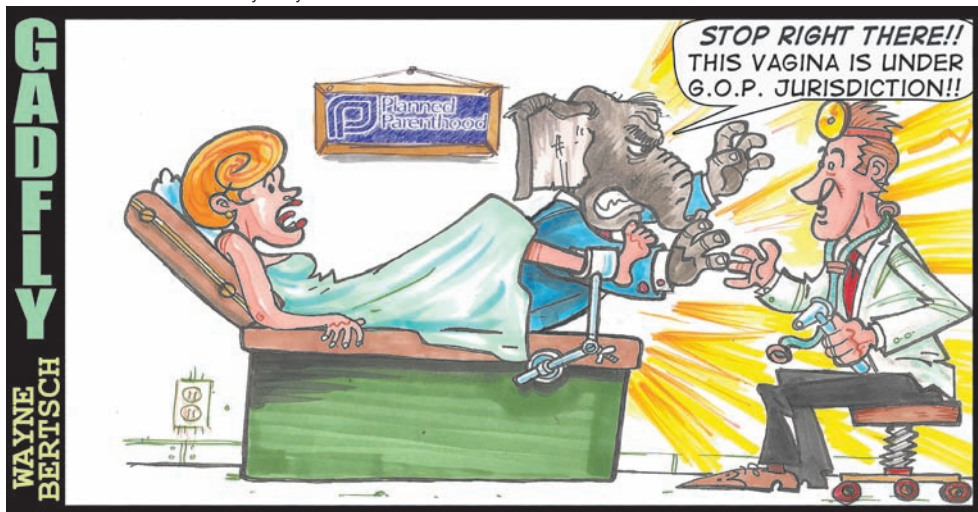
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HAIKU NEWS

by Jim Poyser

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ensures perpetuation
of more mourners to...

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predisposition toward
pre-revolution

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with tea party to tell jet
fighter No you can't!

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energy budget bites off
more than it can Chu

how did we get to
the point where we will allow
poor people to freeze?

Wisconsin workers
storm Statehouse; sometimes labor
doesn't feel like work

House GOP fires
climate advisors to make
warming go away

National Christmas
Tree falls — no one was there to
hear it make no sound

THUMBSUP THUMBSDOWN

'RIGHT TO WORK' PASSES COMMITTEE

Despite huge protests against union-busting legislation in our Statehouse, Indiana House Republicans have moved forward on a so-called "Right-to-Work" bill that would strip unions of their collective bargaining power statewide. Gov. Mitch Daniels has said he doesn't want to touch it. Given all the press swirling around Wisconsin, one would think the bill would seem even more toxic now. Still, the bill passed committee Monday, and heads to the House for a full vote, where a solid GOP majority waits and salivates.

BUT WAIT!

Word trickling in from the Statehouse at publication time indicated House Democrats were leaving the state to prevent a vote, just like Democrats did in Wisconsin. The move came amidst a second consecutive day of protests by union laborers, teachers, social justice advocates, clergy — pretty much a cross-section of people with consciences (note no mention of journalists). A report in *The Indianapolis Star* indicated Dems were bound for parts unknown in Illinois and perhaps Kentucky. If the stand-off continues, there's no telling the extent to which this could muck up the GOP agenda. Oops.

THEN AGAIN...

But wait, again! Several other bills on the conservative agenda moved forward in one way or another this week, painting a bleak picture for social legislation in Indiana. Among them were Arizona-style illegal immigration reforms, proposals that would cut Planned Parenthood funding and restrict abortions, and a same-sex marriage ban. We can't say we're surprised; since Republicans gained a majority in both chambers, progressive Hoosiers have rightfully dreaded what's to come. One can only hope that Democrats never come home from out-of-state, or that GOP leaders decide to shift their focus back to the issue that got them elected last year: job creation. At any rate, this emotional roller coaster is killing us.

SURVIVING WHILE DRIVING

One of the few sane decisions made in the Statehouse last week, Indiana's Senate approved a ban on texting while driving, following the House's example. Authored by Rep. Win Moses (D-Fort Wayne), the proposal aims to extend the state's current restrictions, which only apply to motorists under 18. True, drivers may be inconvenienced by a law forbidding the typing, sending and reading of texts. But it's clear this is a big win for road safety. And considering how pockmarked with potholes our city streets are these days, we really don't need any further distractions.



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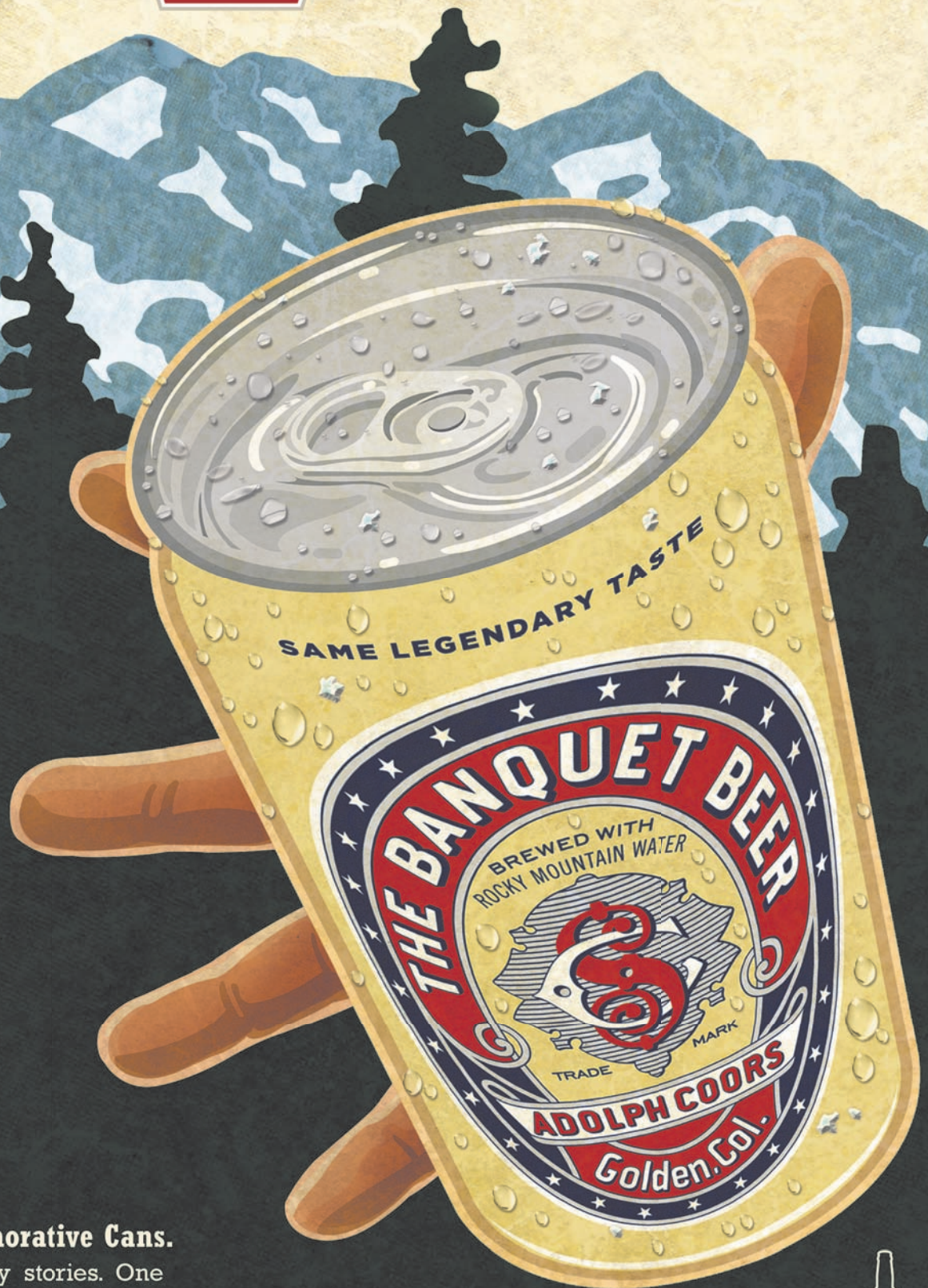
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Legislating the bedroom

House says some marriages are more equal than others

BY TYLER FALK
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

When Casey O'Leary and Jenni White first met each other during a production of *The Vagina Monologues* at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis, they never would have guessed that they would be married at the same church two years later.

At least White, 35, would have never guessed it.

"When the show was over I asked her out and she had no idea why I still wanted to hang out after we were done with the show," O'Leary, 36, told NUVO. "Then she sort of figured it out. And we've been together ever since."

The two women plan to be married next month in Indianapolis, but they aren't naive about Indiana's laws regarding gay marriage. The Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis where they are members recognizes marriages of all couples – both straight and gay.

"We were both aware that the marriage wouldn't be considered legal at this point, but we're hopeful and always have been hopeful that Indiana would follow the lead of other states that have made it legal," O'Leary said.

So while they will be technically married in the church, they will not be able to enjoy the myriad legal benefits conferred upon straight married couples. In Indiana, they aren't even eligible for the benefits available to gay couples in civil unions, as is the case in some other states.

"I understand that for a lot of people it's a moral issue for religious reasons," O'Leary said. "They believe that being homosexual is immoral. But I'm expected to pay taxes and I'm expected to be a good citizen."

The chances of meaningful reform toward Indiana marriage

equality are looking dim, if not downright unrealistic. Equality suffered a major blow last week when the Indiana House of Representatives took the first step towards making its same-sex marriage laws some of the harshest in the nation.

By an overwhelming 70-26 vote, the Indiana House passed House Joint Resolution 6, which, if instituted, would not only ban gay marriage in the Indiana constitution, but also anything "substantially similar" to marriage – including civil unions. Currently, 30 other states have constitutional gay marriage bans, and 20 are about as strict as the legislation proposed in Indiana.

Suddenly, despite years of unsuccessful attempts to get a same-sex marriage ban in the Indiana Constitution, the ban looks like it might have a chance in a Republican-led Statehouse.

To O'Leary and White, it just feels like more discrimination on top of what they already feel.

"Having been a good citizen of this state, and then to be told that somehow I'm less worthy of a marriage license, is just infuriating," O'Leary said. "It makes no sense."

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– Casey O'Leary

Cold feet

Constitutional changes – like last November's amendment cementing state property tax caps – are not easy to make, and the resolution has a long road ahead.

The successful House vote sends HJR 6 to the Senate for a vote. If it passes, the ban must pass both chambers a second time under a separately elected legislature – at minimum, two years from now. A public referendum on Election Day would enshrine it in the Constitution.

But last week's vote in the House was a noticeable change



PHOTO BY MARK LEE

Jenni White, left, and Casey O'Leary are scheduled to marry one another next month. Same-sex marriage is already illegal in Indiana, but an amendment to the state constitution would mean there's little hope that could change.

from years past when the resolution perennially died in the Democrat-controlled House. The last time a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage passed the House was in 2005. It has passed four times in the Senate since then.

While it doesn't seem like O'Leary and White will have a problem with cold feet, the same can't be said for many House Democrats with regard to the marriage ban. Eleven of them broke ranks to support the legislation. One Republican voted against it.

Perhaps the most surprising vote came from Minority Leader, Rep. B. Patrick Bauer (D-South Bend). As the former Speaker, he was instrumental in blocking such legislation in past sessions.

"We're very disappointed in Representative Bauer," said Rick Sutton, President of Indiana Equality Action, a gay and gender rights advocacy coalition. "His vote was a complete surprise. We're shocked, disappointed, we're disgusted."

Bauer's motives are unclear. Numerous requests for comment from NUVO were not returned by Bauer or the resolution's coauthor, Rep. Dave Cheatham (D-North Vernon), also a Democrat.

Some inside the Statehouse

note that, with little to lose in the minority, House Democrats are more concerned with protecting their right flank in view of November's huge electoral losses.

In some cases, at least, socially-conservative Democrats may have felt freer to support a measure the 60-member Republican majority would have passed anyway.

"From the first day I announced my candidacy for state representative in 1998, I was clear about the values I held on 'social' issues," wrote Rep. Peggy Welch (D-Bloomington), in a prepared letter she shared with NUVO, noting that she had voted for the resolution once before, in 2005. "I have attempted to be transparent."

Whatever the reason, advocates and gay couples worry that with Republicans running the show and Democrats unwilling to mount a serious public opposition, there's little standing in the way of the bill's passing on this first run through the Statehouse.

"It's a difficult climate to stand up for the right thing," Sutton said. "We're told that (Bauer) wants to allow this to go to the voters. But last time I checked we elected representatives to make decisions."

Straight and narrow

With so many major issues occupying the Statehouse, like the economy and education

reform, it's a curious time for the legislature to spend its energy passing a same-sex marriage amendment – especially considering same-sex marriage is already illegal in Indiana.

But while Indiana code states that "only a female may marry a male," and "only a male may marry a female," supporters of the resolution want to make sure the law can't be overturned in the courts someday, as it has been in other states.

"We are ensuring that our current law, which the vast majority of Hoosiers support, is not overturned by an activist judge," said the resolution's author, Rep. Eric Turner (R-Marion) in a statement after the bill passed.

Indiana University law professor Deborah Widiss said that was poor justification because the court has already upheld the law.

"The Indiana courts have looked at the Indiana constitution and said Indiana's marriage law is perfectly constitutional under the Indiana Constitution," Widiss said. "There's no reason to think that analysis would change in the future."

But some supporters, like Curt Smith, president of the Indiana Family Institute, a socially-conservative Christian group associated with Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family, argue that the broader



intent is to reinforce the existing institution of marriage. Like the ban's detractors, he pointed to the fact that same-sex marriages are already illegal; the bill, hence, would not technically create any new discrimination, he said.

"It's good public policy to take that jurisdiction out of the courts and allow the people to speak and define such an important and seminal relationship," Smith said. "At a time when divorce rates are high and a number of couples are choosing not to marry, it is a good public policy step for states to affirm their primacy in family law."

Law of unintended consequence

While a constitutional ban would keep gays from enjoying some of the rights reserved for straight people, it could also result in broad, negative consequences lawmakers might not have intended, Widiss said.

Especially problematic is a clause in HJR 6 that says legal status identical to or substantially similar to that of marriage will not be valid or recognized for unmarried couples of any gender.

"Because that language is so broad, and because it would be in the constitution, it would impact how all those other laws are analyzed," Widiss said. "That's why things like the domestic violence laws or domestic partner benefits are impacted by constitutional amendments like this one."

Widiss pointed to Ohio – which has gay marriage laws similar to the ones proposed in HJR 6 – where two

judges ruled that the state's domestic violence laws did not apply to unmarried straight couples, because of the constitutional language in the gay marriage ban.

"Ultimately, the Ohio Supreme Court disagreed and said the domestic violence law still could be enforced," Widiss said. "But who knows how many people in the interim weren't able to get protective orders. They have suffered considerably under that interpretation. And here we don't know how the Indiana courts would resolve a question like that."

State Rep. Scott Pelath (D-Michigan City) supports the language in the state code that bans gay marriage, but he, too, thought a constitutional ban was excessive.

"I believe a constitutional amendment on the same topic is redundant and unnecessarily divisive," especially the section that prevents civil unions, he said in a statement. "If enacted, this language will put a lot of lawyers to work."

Going nowhere

With little chance of getting their marriage recognized by the state, it would be understandable if O'Leary, an Indiana resident for 12 years, and White, a lifelong resident, moved to a state where gay marriage is permitted – or at least civil unions.

But that has never been an option for the couple, O'Leary said. Neither feels she should have to move. They both have children from previous heterosexual marriages and their roots are in Indiana.

"Both of our ex-husbands live locally and work locally," O'Leary said. "We would never think of trying to separate our children from their fathers. ... We want to live here and we want to make our lives here."

O'Leary, who was 32 when she came out, was married to a man and had children before realizing she was gay.

"I had thought I was straight my entire life," she said. "I married a man, was very happily married, and then fell in love with a woman and it just turned my whole life upside-down."

"It hasn't been easy, but meeting (Jenni) has been the best part of the entire journey."

Having only been out in the open about her homosexuality for about four years, O'Leary said feeling the discrimination personally – by way of a same-sex marriage ban, for example – was something new.

"This is the first time I've ever really understood what it feels like to be told that someone else has decided that what I want to do is not acceptable," she said.

But while it's frustrating for O'Leary to think about living in a state where, as she said, "discrimination could be written into the constitution," she and White don't have much time to be too worried about what could happen three years from now.

They have a wedding to get ready for. "We're sort of a modern family, but we're a good family," O'Leary said. "It's just sad to think that so many legislators could just so easily make a decision that affects us so deeply." ■



PHOTO BY MARK LEE

White and O'Leary met at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis, which recognizes same-sex marriage even though the state does not.

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PHOTO BY GREG THE MAYOR

BETA MALE'S

mirrorball world

BY PAUL F. P. POGUE
MUSIC@NUVO.NET

Meeting up with Beta Male is like setting up a clandestine rendezvous with, say, Deepthroat.

"Drive to the corner of such and such a place downtown," said the voice over the phone. "Call this number and we will give further instructions."

Camped out on a frigid winter night in the shadow of Lucas Oil Stadium, I found myself wondering if this would be an interview or some sort of fraternity hazing.

Because Beta Male is not a band known for its restraint. I last got to know them a few years ago when they exploded onto the local music scene, propelled by a penchant for self-promotion and a taste for the spectacular. They one-upped themselves with every show, whether with near-naked hula-hooping

or ridiculously skimpy-bordering-on-nonexistent costumes.

In print, I described them as "David Bowie meets George Michael in a space-age band of lunatics" and frequently wondered if they might actually burn down a club someday. P. David Hazel fronted from behind, playing drums while singing; wife Allison Hazel and partner-in-conspiracy Jess Hack provided keyboards and dancing (sometimes in the back, and sometimes right up front). Other members came and went during those early years.

As I wait outside the hulking stadium, my iPod plays my favorite Beta Male song, "Mirrorball," one of their earliest songs and a longtime live-show staple, driven by a ferocious hook and pounding bassline.

Sometimes the whole "crazysexycool" thing ticked people off. I often got the feeling Beta Male — particularly Allison, who directs most of the band's PR operations — enjoyed pushing people's buttons. "There were all these rules about how people were supposed to sound and present themselves," Allison told me once. "We got a lot of criticism when we started down that hypersexual road." In one noteworthy incident, she and Jess showed up at an event in burqas just to stick it to the naysayers who didn't like the whole nearly-naked thing.

Given all this, I could be forgiven for holding out suspicion that tonight's outing will somehow end up with me in the trunk of a car trying to dial a cell phone with my teeth. No such madness; the cloak-and-dagger business had to do

with a surprise birthday party for Jess at a nearby apartment.

When I finally got the coordinates and arrived at party central, I found the band more down to earth than I expected — in other words, they didn't seem remotely inclined to throw me in a trunk. After the party, we ended up spending a good chunk of time bar-hopping, which I recommend as the best possible way to get to know a band.

One key point we mused on that night: How pop culture has caught up to Beta Male.

"When we started out, there was no Lady Gaga," Allison says as we all talk over drinks in a hazy cigar bar downtown — our third meeting site of an ever-shifting evening, 2 a.m. and counting. "It's not only accepted but expected in the broader culture that people are going to do wild things."

Underoos and unitards

So how has the band adjusted to the zeitgeist? Why, by calming the hell down just as everyone else is ratcheting up. No wonder we made it through the entire evening without anyone spontaneously combusting.

"We're moving into a phase where there's nothing to rail against," Allison says, in between screamingly loud blues sets at the Slippery Noodle, stop No. 2 of the night. "This reaction of 'You all don't belong here' has faded away."

"Our culture is oversaturated; we're bombarded with so many visual and sexual cues that it's become the norm," Jess says.

Their music has become refined — even,

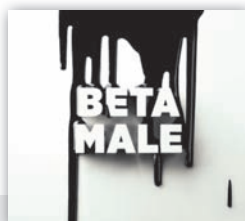
dare I say it, mature — and a Beta Male set these days is as likely to feature evening wear as unitards or Underoos. After releasing demos and EPs, the band has completed their first full-length album, and is ready to move onto the next stage, whatever that may be.

"We've come all the way around," P. David says. "For a while it was this whole dance rock movement, where the only thing that made sense to people was colorful neon explosions and sexiness and booty shorts, and that really wasn't us. We've come back to where we want to have fun."

Beta Male still have a Bowie-gone-electric thing going on, their sound very much a product of the glam 1970s and new-wave 1980s. But for all the electronic tricks available — and P. David loves playing with his toys — it's still a stripped-down, guitar-and-keyboards sort of band.

Back when everyone actually listened to albums in order and not just iTunes downloads, the more experimental bands, especially the prog-rockers and the new-wavers, put a lot of emphasis on pacing. Start the album out with a burst of energy, ebb and flow over the course of 60 minutes or so, and close on a slightly melancholy song that's a nice sendoff, equal parts elegiac and hopeful, the aural equivalent of "Thank you, goodbye!"

Beta Male's new release follows that template. The album includes reinterpretations of several songs the band has been playing since the beginning. "Mirrorball" takes on a darker sound, but with a cer-



WHAT: Beta Male (release show), Slothpop, Pop Lolita, Andy D

WHERE: Radio Radio, 1119 E. Prospect St.

WHEN: Friday, Feb. 25, 9 p.m., \$10 (includes CD), 21+

tain hopefulness about it, a sense of “here we are, here’s what we’ve done, take it and hold it and we’ll see you next time.” The album’s version of “Mother’s World,” another longtime Beta Male favorite, is more polished than its demo — and also a little more unnerving, a shifty-eyed glance into the corners of the room where you’re not sure what’s there and you’re less sure you even want to know.

They’ve always had a political edge to their work (“When you see injustice going on and just go back to your drink or whatever, we’re the first to call bullshit,” Jess says), but a lot of it is equally applicable to day-to-day life. I don’t think it’s coincidental that several Beta Male songs are written in second person — “Are You Holden?” and “Where Were You?” come to mind. The politics are less in the lyrics than the structure — most songs virtually out to the listener, demanding to know “Who the hell are YOU really?”

A few years can make a lot of difference. Beta Male’s music has always been restrained, but the most recent incarnations of the group carry the definite tenor of age and experience. “A lot of the material is very dark and introverted, not extroverted music,” P. David says.

“It’s more organic,” Jess comments. “It’s like you’re more comfortable with your position. You own it now. Which speaks for the band and how we’ve evolved. At first you were unsure and we were unsure.”

“I don’t really feel that way,” P. David responds. “When I churned out that first EP in five days, I had a very clear idea of what I wanted to do. It was very rough and I’ve since settled into what Beta Male is and what the sound is. The album is thematically back to that early mood, but it’s better than the original stuff. We’ve gotten a lot more solid.”

The birth of the beta male

Beta Male was born a few years ago when P. David, then of Extra Blue Kind, felt dissatisfied with that band’s poppy feel. He locked himself in a room for a week, during which he conjured up a five-song EP. After Extra Blue Kind dissolved, he devoted the bulk of his creative efforts to Beta Male.

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“I’d created a cartoon character who started to stand for things,” P. David says of the band’s name and philosophy. “The beta male, the man behind the man, the little dude who’s driving inside the brain.”

“Did Beta Male embody for you what you couldn’t express in everyday life?” Jess asks him. (Honestly, the best interviews are

the ones where it’s like I’m not even here. I get the feeling that the band members themselves are still exploring themselves what this all-new, all-different Beta Male actually is.)

“No, I was just trying to embarrass myself by being as honest as possible about things,” he replies. “I wanted to see how far I could go with the philosophy. We live our lives as a farce because there’s this biological process going on behind us. You think you’re in control of everything you’re doing, but you have no idea how to turn food into energy. You have no control or input over these processes that your life depends on.”

Even if they’ve “matured” some, Beta Male haven’t given up the theatrics. Not long ago, Allison and Jess dressed up as sex dolls and performed their set with robotic focus. Sometimes all band members wear masks.

“Every band presents themselves the way they want to be seen,” Allison says. “To go with no frills is a gimmick in itself. You’re always trying to package yourself. We’ve just been more brazen about it.”

“We’re trying to put the mystery back into what we’re doing,” P. David says. “With the whole dance rock thing, there was a general impression that we were the sex rock band. It’s still theatrical; we still represent ideas physically onstage, but without neon and dayglo. But things like the masks create a creepy darkness.”

The beta male. Man behind the man. “We want people to think about what’s behind their own mask,” Jess says. “We want our audience to look inside themselves and realize they’re not necessarily in control.”

“The way we’re talking, it sounds like we were really thinking it through, that it was designed like this,” P. David muses. “It’s been very honest and the ideas keep coming through. When I first started Beta Male, I wanted to make a record that I would want to buy myself. That hasn’t changed.”

The whole thing’s a work in progress. Nobody knows where this experiment will end, not even Beta Male.

“Some things are going to work and some things aren’t, but we’re not scared anymore,” Jess says.

Allison: “Were we ever?” P. David: “I’m scared every time!” (For full effect, you have to imagine these statements said perfectly simultaneously. You couldn’t time a situation comedy better.) “But I’m more scared NOT to change,” P. David adds.

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PHOTO BY GREG THE MAYOR
Allison Hazel dances with a hula hoop at Locals Only in 2008.

P. DAVID HAZEL



“The CEO”

Vocals, drums, overall maestro

Representative quote: “There’s not room in a band like this for musicians with egos.”

Pogue’s thoughts: It’s funny that a band so known for being in-your-face is directed and driven by someone so introspective, but that’s part of the genius of the thing.

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Keyboard, bass, vocals, dance, overall planning

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ABOVE PHOTOS BY PAUL F.P. POGUE

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28 MONDAY
ENVIRONMENT

Bicycle lessons from Portland

No doubt you've seen how the bicycling culture has grown in Indianapolis over the past few years. One key player in Indianapolis' push for bicycle and pedestrian transportation is **Health By Design**, and they are raising awareness about bicycling with their Urban Scholar Planning Series, which organizes educational events designed to inform professionals, policy-makers and community members about public health, environmental concerns and quality of life in an urban area. Health By Design has invited **Mia Birk**, former Bicycle Coordinator of Portland, Ore., one of the country's most bike-friendly cities. Birk will talk about the bicycle lessons learned in Portland on two occasions on Monday: from 2-4 p.m. at the **Indiana Government Center** South, 402 W. Washington St. and 5:30-7:30 p.m. at **Euphoria/Creation Café**, 337 W. 11th St. For more: www.healthbydesignonline.org. Register online. See nuvo.net for an extended interview with Mia Birk. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Mia Birk is credited with helping transform Portland, Oregon, into one of the country's best bicycling and walking cities.

24 THURSDAY
POETRY

Kellogg Writers: Terrance Hayes

He's been honored with a Whiting Writers Award, a Pushcart Prize, three Best American Poetry selections and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation, so, you know, we're pretty sure that your Thursday night should be spent at the **University of Indianapolis** for a poetry reading by **Terrance Hayes**, part of the Kellogg Writers Series. He has four poetry books out so far, but we recommend *Hip Logic*, which not only was the winner of the 2001 National Poetry Series, but contains what we think is his best work,



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Heralded poet Terrance Hayes appears at UIndy.

"Fire." Hayes will be speaking Feb. 24 at 7:30 p.m. at the Good Hall at the University of Indianapolis, 1400 E. Hanna Ave. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.uindy.edu or call 788-3368. ■

24 THURSDAY
VISUAL ART

Bernadette Ostrozovich's 'etc'

She cites Geppetto and Pygmalion as her heroes and doesn't say no to using bottle caps or glitter as serious artistic mediums. Stemming from a relationship with her students she calls "symbiotic," **Bernadette Ostrozovich**, who has a BFA and MFA in drawing and painting, explored many types of media, including mosaics, collages and jewelry. She'll share her creative energy by hosting a gallery talk on Thursday. Her show, **etc**, opened Feb. 14 and runs until Feb. 25 at the **Marian University Art Gallery**, located on the first floor of Fisher Hall, 3200 Cold Spring Rd. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekdays, although appointments at



SUBMITTED PHOTO

"Diaspora: mysterious monkeys/mysterious moons" by Bernadette Ostrozovich.

later times can be scheduled. The gallery talk and reception will be held Feb. 24 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call 955-6000 or visit www.marian.edu. ■

24 THURSDAY
SPORTS

Meet Gordon Hayward

The baby-faced assassin is back. **Gordon Hayward** may have made us cry last year when he decided to leave Butler to become the second player from the school to play in the NBA, but watching him play with the Utah Jazz has calmed us down a bit as we get to experience one of our own making it big. Hayward will be making a special appearance at Hinkle for the **Jukes Foundation for Kids**, founded by Avery Jukes, a senior team member from last year. Come out, reminisce about the craziness of last March and support kids in both the United States and Uganda, Feb. 24 at 6:30 p.m. in **Hinkle Fieldhouse**, 510 W. 49th St. For more information, visit www.jukesfoundationforkids.org or call 373-0228. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Just like old times: Gordon Hayward will return to town.

24 THURSDAY
LECTURE

Lynda Barry at Herron

Illustrator and writer **Lynda Barry** is coming to **Herron School of Art and Design** at IUPUI for a lecture as part of the Rufus & Louise Reiberg Reading Series. Her book, *What It Is*, is one of the texts used in introductory English at IUPUI and has won the 2009 Will Eisner Comics Industry

Award. Barry has been said to be "... an evangelist who urges people to pick up a pen—or a brush... and look at their own lives with fresh, forgiving eyes." The lecture will take place at the Basile Auditorium of Eskenazi Hall (735 W. New York St.) Thurs. Feb. 24 at 7:30 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Illustration by Lynda Barry.



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AL JACKSON



She is best known for playing "Stifler's mom," the consummate "MILF," in the American Pie films, though she is also known for supporting parts in other films, including Hilary Duff's stepmother in A Cinderella Story, Paulette, the manicurist in Legally Blonde and its sequel, and the voice of Aunt Fanny in the animated feature Robots.



Jackson has been on NBC's Last Comic Standing in 2004. A 2006 appearance on Comedy Central's Live at Gotham leading to a segment on Comedy Central's Friday Night Stand-up and being named as a national spokesman for Comedy Central's Address. In 2008 he appeared on MTV's MVP's, a recurring role on F/N MTV for the MTV Network as well as a return to NBC on Last Comic Standing.

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GO&DO

24 THURSDAY PERFORMANCE ARTS Basile at Basile

Synchronicity is the spice of life. Indy's **Frank Basile** and New York City's **Frank Basile** found each other recently, and the result of this strange coincidence is this Thursday's **Basile at Basile**. Presented by the Indianapolis Opera and Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, the event is in honor of Academy Award winning actress Celeste Holm, who is being presented with a Career Achievement Award. Holm's husband, Frank Basile, will also be part of the event, serenading the audience with musical stylings

ranging from the "Great American Songbook" to songs from musicals in which Celeste appeared. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres are served at 6 p.m., the concert and tribute begin at 7:30 p.m. A reception with Holm and the artists will follow the performance. Tickets range from \$75 - \$100. The Basile Opera Center is located at 4011 N. Pennsylvania St. Visit www.indyopera.org or call (317) 283-3531 for more information. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Which Frank Basile is this? The opera singer, not Indy's Frank Basile!

25 STARTS FRIDAY THEATRE IndyFringe's diaspora

Diaspora [n.] the scattering of people away from an established homeland. Half/Black Productions dives deeply into this concept with, **diaspora**, their adaptation of poet Saul Williams' "The Dead Emcee Scrolls," a work that explores the life of a forgotten man. Adapted and directed by Michael Hosp, the performance stars Jonah D. Winston. Theater-goers who've seen plays at Butler will immediately recognize this actor, whose powerful presence has wowed many a crowd. The play runs Feb. 25, 26 and March 4, 5, 12 at 8 p.m., and Feb. 27 and March 6, 13 at 7 p.m. Tickets run \$10 for adults or \$7 for students, teachers, and seniors. **IndyFringe Theatre** is located at 719 E. St. Clair St. Check out www.halfblackproductions.com, www.indyfringe.org or call (317) 721-9458 for more information. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jonah D. Winston stars in "diaspora" at IndyFringe.

25 & 26 FRI. & SAT. DANCE Midwinter Dance Festival

Any dance devotee would be completely amiss to pass up an opportunity to see a Balanchine piece. The Butler Ballet's annual **Midwinter Dance Festival** will feature **Walpurgisnacht Ballet**, one of Balanchine's historical works that was originally performed by the New York City Ballet in 1980. In addition, five other pieces choreographed by Butler's own dance faculty will be featured, including a piece honoring the Indonesian tsunami victims by Susan McGuire and a piece by Marek Cholewa based on tales from India. The festival will be held both Feb. 25 & 26 at 8 p.m. at **Clowes Memorial Hall**. Tickets range from \$21.50-\$28.50 for adults, \$17-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Butler dancers take to the stage this weekend.

\$23 for children, students and seniors and \$14-\$20 for groups of 15 or more. Tickets can be bought at the Clowes box office, online at ticketmaster.com or by calling (800) 982-2787. For more information, call 317-940-9822 or visit www.butler.edu/dance. ■

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25 FRIDAY PERFORMING ART Cabaret Queen

Take out your dapper '30s style suit or swanky black dress, because **Andrea Marcovicci** is paying tribute to the classiest of the classy such as Audrey Hepburn and Bing Crosby by singing their most famous silver-screen hits just in time for Oscars weekend. Expect familiar tunes like "The Way We Were" and "As Time Goes By" to make you feel nostalgic for times when

people sang in movies without it having to be *High School Musical*. The movie magic happens Feb. 25 & 26 at 8 p.m. at the **Cabaret at the Columbia Club**, 121 Monument Circle. Tickets range from \$45 to \$65. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.thecabaret.org or call 275-1169. ■



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Andrea Marcovicci

26 SATURDAY COMEDY Laff-a-Thon 4

Rolling on the floor, in stitches, tickling your funny bone, etc.: choose which-ever cliché you want, because the fourth annual **Laff-a-Thon** from **INDYPROV and Comedy Sportz** is happening this weekend. For twelve hours, expect to be at the mercy of the local Emmy-nominated improv troupe as they strive to keep you entertained. Each hour supports a different cause, from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation to the National MS Society. Laughter and good deeds, can't beat it. The hilarity is Feb. 26 from 12 p.m. to 12 a.m. at **Theatre**



ComedySportz improv artists.

on the Square, 627 Massachusetts Ave. Tickets are available at the door, with a suggested \$5 admission for each hour of the event. For more information, call 525-7558 or visit www.indyprov.com. ■

26 SATURDAY DANCE Adding Latin flavor to Broadway tunes

Cultural Explosion Dance Company's **Broadway Goes Latin** is coming to Indianapolis for one night only, presented by IntoSalsa. The program uses popular Broadway scenes and recreates them with a Latin theme. Musical numbers have been borrowed from *West Side Story*, *Chicago*, *Dirty Dancing*, *Stomp*, *Big Spender* and *Grease*. Cultural Explosion is one of the world's most famous salsa dance companies. Broadway goes spicy on Saturday, Feb. 26, 8 p.m. at the **Pike Performing**



Cultural Explosion Dance Company.

Arts Center, 6701 Zionsville Rd. Tickets (group discounts available): \$40 VIP, \$25 adult, \$20 senior and student. Call (317) 216-5455 or go online at www.intosalsa.com or www.pikepac.org. After-party at El Meson Mexican Restaurant, 8920 Wesleyan Rd. from 9pm-3am, \$8 cover at door. ■

26 SATURDAY FUNDRAISER Polar Plunge

You may need to keep FDR's whole thing about fear and fear itself in mind if you are a daring soul brave enough to join in the twelfth year of the **Special Olympics of Indiana** hosting a **Polar Plunge** at the **Eagle Creek Reservoir**. If

you thrive off adrenaline, we're pretty sure this event is for you, but if not, we're still pretty sure Special Olympics is more than enough reason to test out just how fearless you are. Participants must raise \$75 to take the frigid dip. The plunge happens Feb. 26, 8 a.m. at the Eagle Creek Reservoir, 7840 W. 56th St. First 100 pre-registers will be eligible for the early bird plunge at 8:30 a.m. that day. For more information, go online at www.soindiana.org and visit the "Special Events" page or call 328-2000. ■

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Epic beauty and mystery

Thornton Dial's art at the IMA

BY DAVID HOPPE
DHOPPE@NUVO.NET

They have everything we're looking for in art," says Joanne Cubbs, curator of *Hard Truths: The Art of Thornton Dial*, the works in this 20-year retrospective by a remarkable American master opening Feb. 25 at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

"They're epic in their size, but also in what they offer," Cubbs says of Dial's vivid, large-scale paintings and assemblages. "This incredible, dark beauty. This incredible mystery. Both a physical engagement and an emotional and conceptual one."

For Cubbs, this exhibition is the culmination of an engagement with Dial's work that began in the early 1990s, when she was recruited by the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, to create a new department dedicated to the work of folk, self-taught, or so-called "outsider" artists – the first program of its kind to be established in an American encyclopedic museum of art.

"I was very much interested in the kind of art that, for one reason or another, did not make its way into museums," says Cubbs. "Thornton Dial, at that point, was a major figure in that field of work in the South."

Indeed, Dial, who was born in rural Alabama in 1928 and spent a large portion of his life working as a welder, helping to make railroad cars for the Pullman Standard Company, had just had his first major exhibition in New York City, a dual show that took place simultaneously at the Museum of American Folk Art and the New Museum of Contemporary Art.

The phenomenal nature of this two-headed exhibition, says Cubbs, "reflected an interesting conundrum in the work of Thornton Dial, which was, 'What do we do with this individual? Where do we place his work?' He's always been too astounding to place easily in any category."

The difficulty members of the fine arts establishment have had in categorizing Dial's art reveals widely held preconceptions about what constitutes fine art, where it comes from and who is supposed to make it.

"If you look a little more closely at the nature of categories themselves, they become so highly problematized as to become useless in terms of illuminating any single artist's work," says Cubbs. "They have more to do with the fantasies of those who have the power to define what art is in our culture. In the case of Thornton Dial, I think it's safe to say that any artist who produced a body of work of this scope and significance would have long ago become a major, recognized force within the art world."

Cubbs maintains that the art establishment's failure to accord Dial this kind of



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A detail from "Trophies (Doll Factory)" by Thornton Dial.



PHOTO BY MARK LEE

Joanne Cubbs is curator for the Thornton Dial show.

"living treasure" cultural status, to include his work in the canon of artists from his generation, tells us more about the politics of our art and cultural scene than it does about Dial's art work.

"He's a black, elderly, working class, unlettered man from the deep rural South," says Cubbs. "And he has no desire to expatriate himself from his origins. They have provided him the substance, the point of view, the perspective from which he has offered us these incredible, probing comments on the nature of our world, our history and our humanity."

As this exhibition's title, *Hard Truths*, suggests, an important dimension of Dial's work lies in his conscious engagement with the social and political culture in which he has lived. At first, this inhibited Dial from seeking a public audience.

"He was very concerned about the political nature of his work, that he might be offending the dominant white over-culture, but also fellow members of his community," says Cubbs. "When he realized he would have access to a kind of audience

"[Dial]'s always been too astounding to place easily in any category."

— curator Joanne Cubbs

that was actually interested in his work as an expression of this world-view of his, I think he became very excited. I don't think he's ever pursued recognition within the art world proper, but within the world at large, he had a dream about the possibility of having an audience for his ideas."

In the exhibition, visitors will be able to follow Dial's evolution through early, allegorical works aimed at joining in public discourse about race and class struggle to later pieces that grow increasingly complex and embedded with meanings open to multiple interpretations.

"You can see a development in his work as he's trying to negotiate what his true potential is for reaching out to a wide public audience," says Cubbs. "He starts to make art not so much for easy comprehension by the world, but expressing some of the deepest, most troubling visions of what our history and culture have been... They're parables on the nature of humanity itself."

In this, Dial has been compared with German artist Anselm Kiefer.

"He presents these complex, almost archaeological in their layering, texts so that people have a lot to look at, a lot to decipher and a lot to talk about," says Cubbs.

The Dial exhibition consists of 70 pieces. In figuring out her strategy for presenting this great span, Cubbs says, "I wanted to create a kind of journey because the works themselves are so demanding and hard-hitting; I wanted to lead the visitor through a kind of tour of [Dial's] world and his expressive concerns."

Although she's been in conversation with Dial for the better part of 15 years and had many opportunities to see his works of art, Cubbs says she continues to be "stunned by how physically arresting these pieces are to me."

She encourages visitors to *Hard Truths* to "enter into the puzzles and the mysteries and the layered allegories of the works. Enjoy them. Discover the tiny surprises that exist in most of them. I still suddenly discover some incredible detail that gives me a new angle on what I've been thinking about the piece – or about the world."

As to what Dial will make of this retrospective – which will also tour to art museums in Atlanta, New Orleans and Charlotte, Cubbs says, "This is what would please Thornton Dial the most: To know that others are rising to the occasion of his work." ■



WHAT: *Hard Truths: The Art of Thornton Dial*

WHEN: February 25-September 18, 2011

WHERE: Indianapolis Museum of Art 4000 Michigan Rd.

INFO: www.imamuseum.org
317-923-1331, 24-hour Information line: 317-920-2660



Blake Coleman is on track to win the USHL's scoring title this season.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

He'll "Pack the House"

Blake Coleman leads Ice at annual fundraiser

BY JOE O'GARA
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

Growing up in Plano, Texas, Blake Coleman was introduced to ice hockey by his grandmother, a native New Yorker who would take Blake to Dallas Stars games when he was a youngster. Ice hockey became a passion for the young Coleman, one that has led him to pursue a career in the sport.

Coleman's quest to play in the NHL has landed him in Indianapolis where the 19-year-old center is putting up impressive numbers since joining the Indiana Ice of the United States Hockey League (USHL).

Acquired by the Ice in a trade with the Tri-City Storm in December 2009, the 5'10" 198-lb. Coleman scored eight goals and eight assists in 36 games with the Ice last season, and added two assists in nine play-off games.

Through 43 games this season, Coleman has scored 23 goals and 39 assists for a league-leading 62 points, statistics highlighted by his franchise record five-assist effort in the Ice's 6-2 win over Waterloo on Jan. 2.

Coleman says that playing for Ice coach Charlie Skjodt has been a learning experience.

"He's been through it himself as a player," Coleman says. "Things like dealing with mental mistakes that a player can make on the ice. Even when we have a bad night Charlie tries to keep us on an even keel. And when we win, he doesn't let us

get a big head about it.

"I have worked my way up to where I think Charlie has some faith in me and what I can do for the team."

Skjodt has shown faith in Coleman by placing him on the Ice's first line with 19-year old Daniil Tarasov and 18-year-old Brian Ferlin. The trio is among the USHL's top ten scorers: Tarasov is tied for third (with Dubuque forward Vinny Saponari) with 48 points (22 goals/26 assists) and Ferlin is 9th with 43 points (18 goals/25 assists).

"(Blake Coleman) plays with an edge," Skjodt says. "He is as good a player in the offensive zone as he is in the defensive zone. He has been a great story in the USHL this season as he went from being just a physical winger to someone who is in line to win the league's scoring title."

The upcoming "Pack the House for Charity" game against the Dubuque Fighting Saints will be Coleman's fourth game at Consecro Fieldhouse.

"It's incredible to play in front of so many people," Coleman says. "I have three goals in three games at Consecro. There isn't too much to change in how I play at Consecro (as compared to games at other arenas) even though it is a smaller rink there." ■



WHAT: 17th annual "Pack the House for Charity"
Indiana Ice vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints

WHEN: Saturday, 7 p.m.

WHERE: Consecro Fieldhouse

TICKETS: Consecro Fieldhouse box office, Pepsi Coliseum box office, Ticketmaster 1-800-745-3000, www.ticketmaster.com, or select Wal-Mart and Simon Mall locations. All ages. Proceeds donated to various charities, including Peyton Manning Children's Hospital, Damar Services, The Villages and the United Way.



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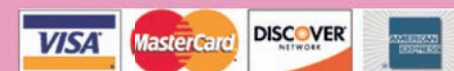
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**The Beijing Consensus:
How China's Authoritarian
Model Will Dominate the
Twenty-First Century**

By Stefan Halper, Basic Books, 2010.

Reviewed by Su-Mei Ooi

Halper's book does a brilliant job of providing the reader with a clear picture of how China's economic clout is now coupled with a growing sophistication in international diplomacy. Nevertheless, while Halper provides a convincing account of how China's economic rise is allowing many developing countries to circumvent governance requirements attached to Western aid and loans he fails to convince the reader that there is such a thing as a "Beijing Consensus."

What is clearly a convergence of interests amongst those who do not agree with Washington can hardly qualify as a counter-hegemonic ideological consensus. What of course interests many countries is China's ability thus far to decouple political from economic development.

While Halper discusses the complexities of China's modernization in Chapter 5, he refrains from predicting if this decoupling is merely temporary and suggests only that existing social pressures will remain contained largely by continued economic growth. If the "China model" will dominate the twenty-first century, however, China's socio-political stability must at least last that long.

All in all, Halper's book is accessible, enjoyable and a good introduction to China and its role in our world today, but leaves some crucial questions unanswered.

—Su-Mei Ooi is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Butler University.

Go to www.butler.edu/BookReview for more recommendations by the faculty and staff of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Butler University.

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A&E REVIEWS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Robert F. Kennedy speaking in Indianapolis, April 4, 1968, the day Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, part of the exhibit at the Indiana Historical Society.

MUSEUMS

**YOU ARE THERE 1968:
ROBERT F. KENNEDY SPEAKS**
★★★★☆

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center, opened Feb. 22; through April 14, 2012 You step through a photograph into a space replicating a basketball court of the former Broadway Christian Center at the corner of 17th and Broadway streets, now part of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park. With 3-D hologram technology, the exhibit puts you into that April 4, 1968 night waiting in a crowd for Robert Kennedy to appear for a presidential race rally. When Kennedy begins to speak you know something is not right. You can't quite absorb the announcement: "Martin Luther King has been shot and killed." Kennedy's words slowly sink in: "Reverend Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love; he died for that cause.... It's about people. We have to make an effort to go beyond division, hatred; we need love and wisdom and compassion for one another." The experience continues in a King/Kennedy Legacy Room featuring a visitor-created experience conceptualized in partnership with Big Car Gallery and exhibits to place Kennedy's speech in the context of the social and racial climate, political atmosphere and community setting of April 4, 1968. Clips from the documentary film *A Ripple of Hope* by Donald Boggs and an interactive touchscreen computer program about the power of words developed in partnership with the Peace Learning Center and the International Interfaith Initiative conclude the visit. 232-1882, www.indianahistory.org

— RITA KOHN

MUSIC

ISO CLASSICAL SERIES PROGRAM NO. 9
★★★★☆

Hilbert Circle Theatre; Feb. 18-19. It's been 23 years since the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra last performed Haydn's three-part *The Creation*, a massive religious work drawing its text from the Book of Genesis, the Book

of Psalms and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Scottish conductor Douglas Boyd gratefully assumed the podium for a monumental triumph of High Classicism, this Haydn oratorio one of Boyd's professed all-time favorite works of any stripe. The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir — in full complement — stood on a tiered platform just back of the players, making for a crowded stage. Three solo singers — soprano Sarah Tynan, tenor Thomas Cooley and baritone Matthew Rose — joined Boyd in front of the ensemble. Haydn begins his work with his orchestral conception of "Chaos," — i.e. before Creation — painting as dark a mood as his Classical-style discipline would allow. Boyd immediately had his strings playing "white" (i.e. no vibrato) with as near a perfect pitch as I could discern. The effect, sustained throughout, fit the mood and the style perfectly. Boyd knew what he wanted from his players, and mostly got it. Each of the soloists shared their vocalism equally in recitatives and arias in which the orchestra often set the mood prior to its textual equivalent. The choral work confirmed the ISC's longstanding reputation throughout as an excellent singing body, in precise consonance with the soloists and players. We had two good examples of Haydn's fugal writing to savor — taking his cue from his oratorio-writing predecessor, George Frideric Handel — each in the final respective choruses of Parts 2 and 3. For more review details, visit www.nuvo.net. 639-4300, www.indianapolissymphony.org

— TOM ALDRIDGE

MUSIC

OUR WORLD OF ART

★★★★☆

The Circle City Chamber Group; The Westin Hotel; Feb. 17. Socializing is the main event at any CCCG event along with food tasting and art show viewing followed by a music program — and concluding with more socializing. Jonathan Scott's photography showcased two series: *Environs* "captures the essence of spaces long forgotten and ignored." Scott's use of natural light brings to mind paintings of Dutch Masters in composition of an unhinged rotting green door leaning against an interior wall [Greenfield Christian School 2010]. The seven landscapes in *MANufactured Horizons* "address the land that surrounds us in the mid-west." Here Archival Ink-Jet is on Aluminum Sheets whereas the interiors are on paper. Two very different points of view emerge from two very different approaches. Soprano Elizabeth Wilson and pianist Heidi Gamble linked a program of music to incorporate the finger food delicacies designed by Westin Chef Stanek. Wilson's personality and acting ability brought verve to Brahms' "The Futile Serenade" [the suitor is left out in the cold] and "Of Eternal Love" [a happier ending]. Wilson was equally captivating with two song cycles by Bernstein— "La Bonne Cuisine: Four Recipes for Voice and Piano" [including a recipe for oxtails, which were served at the start of the event] and "I Hate Music: A Cycle of Five Kids' Songs for Voice and Piano." These seldom heard pieces were deftly accompanied by Heidi Gamble, who further showed a deft touch for getting to the inner core of a work with her solo, Chopin's "Nocturne." 586-2224, www.circlecitychamber-group.org

—RITA KOHN

A&E REVIEWS



PHOTO BY DANIEL AXLER

Georgeanna Smith inhabits the pain, angst and occasional comedy of a psyche in disintegration in NoExit's "4.48 Psychosis."

THEATER/PERFORMANCE

4.48 PSYCHOSIS

★★★★☆

NoExit Performance; Big Car Gallery; directed by Michael Bachman; through March 5. Brutal and beguiling, *4.48 Psychosis*, is not for the faint of heart, nor the thin-skinned of wrist. It's one of those plays that's already in progress when you arrive at the theater. No one comes out to welcome you, invite you turn off your cell phone and note where the nearest exit awaits in case of disaster. It's just Georgeanna Smith, the central character in this piece, staring at you as you come in. Making eye contact with you as sit. And as you squirm. Playwright Sarah Kane wrote this free form poem — no stage directions, scenes or characters defined — and soon after killed herself. Suffice to say, if suicide has been part of your world, then this play will either push the right buttons or smash the wrong ones. In a stunning performance, Georgeanna Smith inhabits the pain, angst and occasional comedy of a psyche in disintegration; she's mesmerizing. Tommy Lewey a fine complement, choreographing the movement and appearing on stage with Smith in various capacities: boyfriend, doctor, shadow. The cast includes Matt Goodrich and (NUVO contributor) Katelyn Coyne as a tapestry of voices that inhabit the back of the theater — and the inside of the main character's mind. Director Michael Bachman makes sure the play doesn't last TOO long, and adds much-appreciated moments of humor and relief throughout. Additional performances: Feb. 25, 26, 27; March 3, 4, 5. 339-0911, noexitperformance.org

— JIM POYSER

to do with his life: to perform Shakespeare so that actions match the words and the words will touch anyone, regardless of education or class. The best of DeVita's story captures the naive audacity that nudges a young man to audition for a New York drama school with a "monologue" from *Jaws* and apply to England's most prestigious acting schools with three non-speaking college theater roles under his belt. Though DeVita failed to catapult himself to greatness in these early attempts, hard work finally took him to a Wisconsin theater troupe, where he has since spent two decades revisiting Shakespeare's words and luring audiences to do the same. DeVita's seemingly self-directed performance, including some commanding Shakespearean soliloquies and some masterful lighting by Ryan Koharchik, is funny, tender and moving, but it is not a finished work. Advertised as 90 minutes, *In Acting Shakespeare* runs two hours plus with an awkwardly placed intermission and ending. DeVita needs to fix his focus on transforming a lifetime of performing into one solid performance. 635-5252, www.irtlive.com.

— JOSEFA BEYER

THEATER/PERFORMANCE

ROMEO & JULIET

★★★★☆

Cardinal Stage Company; directed by Randy White; through March 6 at the John Waldron Arts Center, Bloomington. I've been wanting to see Cardinal in action; formed in 2006, this Bloomington theater company has drawn plenty of attention — from audiences, of course, but also from quality Indy- and Chicago-based actors wanting to strut on its stage. Now I understand why with their current production of *Romeo and Juliet*. A thrust stage creates a three-quarter audience setting so you can see the play AND your fellow audience member, as s/he smiles, sniffs and also ducks the occasional dollop of spittle from one of the exuberant actors. Production values are high, the performances are fun and raucous (the first act, at least, is, thanks to an ebullient turn by Ian Paul Custer as Mercutio), and the acting level is generally excellent. 812-323-3020, www.cardinalstage.org.

— JIM POYSER

THEATER/PERFORMANCE

IN ACTING SHAKESPEARE

★★★★☆

Indiana Repertory Theater, Upperstage; through March 6. James DeVita's solo performance (the third and last in the IRT's Going Solo series) was inspired by Ian McKellen's *Acting Shakespeare*, which chronicled that great British actor's path to and on the stage. Seeing that one-man show as a young man in 1983, DeVita (a fisherman at the time) discovered what he wanted



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Taste of Turkey Bosphorus' mod vibe, delicious hummus

BY ANNE LAKER
EDITORS@NUVO.NET

The waiting area at Bosphorus, tucked into an old house near the Eli Lilly headquarters, is padded with jewel-colored pillows and flanked with dangling blue charms meant to ward off the evil eye. They didn't stop me from giving the Bosphorus waitstaff the evil eye one crowded Friday night. The wait got so long that, in an effort to disperse the maddening crowd, one woman jokingly feigned a rat sighting. Call it a symbol of her enthusiasm for the place.

After the wait, I needed the food at Bosphorus to be redemptively good. And it needed to match or exceed memories of a 2009 trip to Turkey, where seaside breakfasts of figs, yogurt and honey, and dinners of fish, rice and veggies seemed timeless and effortless. The bar was high.

We started with the classic beverage of Turkey: Ayran (\$2.35), a buttermilky drink served in a wine glass — smooth, unsweetened and bright white. Appetizers materialized in the form of grape leaves (or *Dolma*,

\$6.50), stuffed with rice, herbs, currants, and pine nuts. They were a bit mushy for my money, and lacking in spice. Zucchini Fritters (\$6.50) hit higher. They resemble little green waffles and come with a bright sauce bursting with the essence of cucumber — a tantalizing contrast to the hot and toasty fritters themselves.

A basket of fresh warm pita pieces arrived a little later. For an entrée, Dad went for *Kofte* (grilled lamb and beef patties, \$12.50) instead. Three diminutive but well-seasoned patties arrived, arranged with an artist's eye, with a petite serving of rice flecked with peas and a cute salad dressed with vinegar and oregano.

Bosphorus Istanbul Cafe

935 S. East Street
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FRI. 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.
SAT. 12 - 10 p.m.
SUN. 4 - 8 p.m.

FOOD: ★★★★★

ATMOSPHERE: ★★★★★

SERVICE: ★★★★★



PHOTO BY MARK LEE

The stuffed eggplant (Karniyarik, \$12.50) also contains a salad and rice scoop.

Mom decided to go vegetarian with *Guvée* (\$11.50), a casserole of veggies. Had she known this dish would come swimming in a pool of red grease, she wouldn't have bothered. She decided to take it home and drain it as a last resort.

My own stuffed eggplant (*Karniyarik*, \$12.50) was rich without the grease: one half of an eggplant, roasted until creamy, filled with slightly sweet ground beef, tomatoes and peppers. My plate, also containing a little salad and rice scoop, was empty in short order. Don't plan to cart home leftovers from Bosphorus.

At this point, our server decided to take pity on us for our earlier wait and throw in

a free dessert. Mom and I indulged in an overly sweet Tiramisu (\$4.95). Baklava was made in house and sparkled with fresh-tasting walnuts and an unexpected flourish of whipped cream.

Bosphorus reflects the crazy quilt that is Turkey. The menu is inaccurate, in terms of prices and offerings. Its seating system is haphazard. Yes, the hummus is reputed as the best in town. Yes, the décor is charming shabby chic. Yes, it's got that mystical feel you'd want from a Turkish café -- and a mod vibe miles apart from its more formal competitor, the Istanbul Café on West 86th Street. If you plan to go to Bosphorus on a Friday night, just be sure to bring a book. ■

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CULINARY PICKS



16TH ANNUAL INDIANAPOLIS RIB AMERICA FESTIVAL

Ok I know what you're thinking, "Rib Festival? In February?" but it's not exactly that. The 16th Annual Indianapolis Rib America Festival will return to downtown Indy's Military Park (crossing of New York and West Streets) on Labor Day Weekend,

Sep. 2-5. Yes you read that right. The Festival will feature award winning barbaque, music and much more. Reserved seat tickets go on sale Fri., Feb. 18 and will continue to be sold until September 2. Reserved tickets include a seat, access to private restrooms and access to a private bar. No lines!



If you have an item for the Culinary Picks, send an e-mail at least two weeks in advance to culinary@nuvo.net.

BEER BUZZ

BY RITA KOHN



EVENTS

Feb. 23, 6 p.m. Tomlinson Tap Room, Mezzanine level in Indianapolis City Market: tasting of over a dozen Brewers of Indiana Guild Winter Warmer 2011 ReplicAles. New Albanian brewer Jared Williamson is on hand to talk about recreating historical beers.

March 1, 6-8 p.m. Birdy's, 2131 East 71st Street, monthly beer tasting sponsored by Cavalier Distributing [first Tuesday of every month]; open to the general public at \$10 per person

ON TAP & ON SHELVES

From Crown Brewing, Crown Point: "Kennywood Irish Red is on tap. It is Bob Heinlein's Crown Challenge 2010 Best in Show winner. Named after Kennywood Brewing Supply, this Irish Red is a smooth and easy-drinking beer, malt-focused with a light English hop flavor and a clean, dry finish so your palate is ready for another." Crown Brewing's motto is: "saving the planet one refill at a time!" Their site is www.greengrowler.com.

From New Albanian, "Bottles are on shelves. Time to begin asking for them by name, New Albanian's Elector, Elsa and Hoptimus, at your favorite purveyor of fine craft beers."

From Upland: "Ard Ri (High King in old world Gaelic) has returned and he decrees an end to Winter. Our signature St. Patty's day brew gets its distinct color from roasted barley used in the brewing process, and we've stepped up the malt and hops to make this imperial version of the style. It is slightly sweet with a complex malt character, balanced by a large hop addition to make it perfect for the big beer lovers and hop heads alike. Find it on draught and in 22oz bottles."

INDIANA BREWS ON THE MOVE

Sun King is entering into the Bloomington market as of March 2.

Great Crescent Brewing of Aurora, IN, "Is waiting to get on the production schedule at the Ball plant in Monticello, IN. We should be canning beer by late February/early March 2011." Great Crescent thus joins Sun King with canning their beers.

The Ram celebrates its 40th corporate anniversary on Feb. 26

Great Fermentations is starting brewing classes and is taking orders for hops plants. Full information at greatfermentations.com.



If you have an item for Beer Buzz, send an email at least two weeks in advance to beerbuzz@nuvo.net

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Oscars 2011

BY ED JOHNSON-OTT
EJOHNSONOTT@NUVO.NET

Usually I spend a large portion of my annual Oscars story railing about deserving films and artists that appear likely to be shot down by Academy members more concerned with making a statement than voting for the best nominee. This year I'm in agreement with the probable winners in 4 of the 6 major categories. Oh my. Here's this year's run down for this year's event, Sunday, Feb. 20. For local Oscar parties, see nuvo.net.

BEST PICTURE:

Black Swan, *The Fighter*, *Inception*, *The Kids Are All Right*, *The King's Speech*, *127 Hours*, *The Social Network*, *Toy Story 3*, *True Grit*, *Winter's Bone*

Not a bad film in the list, although I never got why so many people went gaga over *The Kids Are All Right*. Doesn't matter in this context, because every prognosticator in the country agrees that the race is between *The Social Network* and *The King's Speech*. The hip, edgy now-a-go-go "Social Network" vs. the inspirational we-can-overcome-handicaps-if-we-work-together *The King's Speech*. *The Social Network* is a critics' darling that won most of the early



PHOTO BY: MERRICK MORTON

Jesse Eisenberg, left, and Joseph Mazzello in 'The Social Network.'

awards, but then boredom with trophy-predictability jump-started a backlash for *The King's Speech* - so dignified, so refined, so British - started looking more and more like the film that would best represent the Oscars. It isn't - while *The King's Speech* is a fine film, *The Social Network* is more challenging, nuanced and satisfying. But remember, we're dealing with the Academy Awards, where *Dances With Wolves* beat *Goodfellas*, *Shakespeare in Love* beat *Saving Private Ryan* and *Crash* beat *Brokeback Mountain*.

WILL WIN: *The King's Speech*

SHOULD WIN: *The Social Network*

BEST ACTOR:

Javier Bardem: *Biutiful*, Jeff Bridges: *True*



PHOTO BY MARK LEE

Colin Firth and Helena Bonham Carter star in 'The King's Speech.'



PHOTO BY WILSON WEBB

Jeff Bridges in 'True Grit.'

Grit, Jesse Eisenberg: *The Social Network*, Colin Firth: *The King's Speech*, James Franco: *127 Hours*

There's no contest here. Colin Firth will win for *The King's Speech*. His performance is rich and moving - Firth always does great work. He's not my choice, though. I really liked what James Franco did in *127 Hours*, but even more impressive was how Jesse Eisenberg dealt with the challenges of his role in *The Social Network*. He was handed a sullen character with limited social skills and he took us inside the guy's head, making him relatable while remaining true to the screenplay.

WILL WIN: Colin Firth

SHOULD WIN: Jesse Eisenberg

BEST ACTRESS:

Annette Bening: *The Kids Are All Right*, Nicole Kidman: *Rabbit Hole*, Jennifer Lawrence: *Winter's Bone*, Natalie Portman: *Black Swan*, Michelle Williams: *Blue Valentine*

Annette Bening is supposed to be the dark horse here. She was excellent in *The Kids Are All Right*, she is widely respected and liked within the acting community, and people are tired of voting for Natalie Portman over and over this year. But here's the thing: Darren Aronofsky handed Portman a big, juicy over-the-top role in his crazy-ass mix of art and schlock and

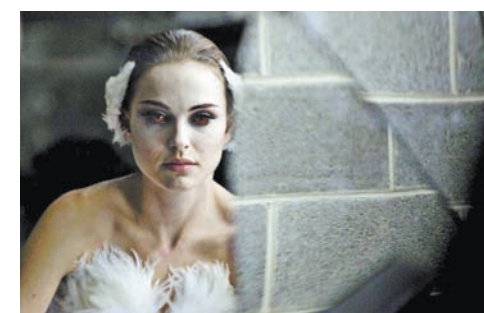


PHOTO BY NIKO TAVERNISE

Natalie Portman stars in 'Black Swan.'

Portman knocked it out of the park. How can anyone - even people who hate *Black Swan* - watch Portman be so sensitive, vulnerable and whacked-out and not want to give her a trophy?

WILL WIN: Natalie Portman

SHOULD WIN: Natalie Portman

DIRECTOR:

Darren Aronofsky: *Black Swan*, David O. Russell: *The Fighter*, Tom Hooper: *The King's Speech*, David Fincher: *The Social Network*, Joel Coen and Ethan Coen: *True Grit*

Let's start by noting that Christopher Nolan was robbed of a nomination for *Inception*. Robbed, I tell you! But then, I'm still steamed that *Exit Through the Gift Shop* wasn't nominated for Best Picture in addition to Best Documentary, so let's move on. There are a number of deserving directors here, but *The Social Network*'s David Fincher managed to take a story full of young men typing and sniping and make it pop and crackle with energy and an intense sense that we were witnessing something very, very new. Of course, that's not why he will win. Fincher will win because Academy members planning to vote for *The King's Speech* for Best Picture will give their votes in this category to *The Social Network* as a consolation prize.

WILL WIN: David Fincher

SHOULD WIN: David Fincher

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MOVIES



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Christian Bale and Mark Wahlberg in 'The Fighter.'

SUPPORTING ACTOR:

Christian Bale: *The Fighter*, John Hawkes: *Winter's Bone*, Jeremy Renner: *The Town*, Mark Ruffalo: *The Kid's Are All Right*, Geoffrey Rush: *The King's Speech*

Christian Bale is as sure a winner in this category as Colin Firth is in Best Actor. All five nominees were excellent, with John Hawkes giving a standout performance in *Winter's Bone*. But not many people know Hawkes, while most movie fans are familiar with Bale and what a stretch the role of Dicky Eklund was for him. And any question of whether Bale may have overacted was removed when the real Dicky made an appearance at the end of the movie.

WILL WIN: Christian Bale

SHOULD: WIN: Christian Bale

SUPPORTING ACTRESS:

Amy Adams: *The Fighter*, Helena Bonham Carter: *The King's Speech*, Melissa Leo: *The Fighter*, Hailee Steinfeld: *True Grit*, Jacki Weaver: *Animal Kingdom*

Bless her heart, Melissa Leo made this category interesting. She was considered the front runner for her bold work in *The Fighter*, until she took out her own For Your Consideration ads in some trade publications. Now the studios take out ads like that all the time, but for Leo to do so independently has stirred up controversy, with some calling her decision "vulgar." Oh the humanity! So will Leo's "vulgarity" cost her the prize? If so, it will likely go to young Hailee Steinfeld, who was so good in *True Grit*? I'm rooting for Leo.

WILL WIN: Melissa Leo, but a Steinfeld win wouldn't be a surprise.

SHOULD WIN: Melissa Leo

FUN FACT: After five terrific seasons on the TV series *Homicide*, Leo got sacked because the powers-that-be ran out of ideas for her gritty, working-class character and decided to replace her with Michelle Forbes, who was sexy in a more traditional Hollywood way. Now Leo's in hot water for looking old-school glamorous in print. Isn't show business wonderful? ■

FILM CLIPS

The following are reviews of films currently playing in Indianapolis area theaters. Reviews are written by Ed Johnson-Ott (EJO) unless otherwise noted.

OPENING

DOGTTOOTH (R)

A black yet comedic film about the strangeness of reality and social control, *Dogtooth* follows three unnamed teenagers who have been confined to their parents' isolated country estate since birth. After years of being terrorized into submission by their father, the children spend their time devising their own games and learning an invented language — until an outsider, brought in to satisfy the son's sexual urges, plants the seed of rebellion. Premieres at the IMA as part of their Oscar Nominees at The Toby series, Feb. 26, at 3 p.m. \$9 public / \$5 IMA members.

EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP (R) ★★★★☆

My favorite film of 2011. Is street art legitimate or just pretentious tagging? About two-thirds of the way through this odd, fun, stimulating little movie, someone says, "I don't know if the joke's on him or us. I'm not even sure there's a joke." *Exit Through the Gift Shop* is a treat whether viewed as a documentary, a sort-a-documentary or a long-con sort-a-documentary. It looks at street art, with the star of the show being the reclusive street artist known as Banksy. But wait, the movie is really less about Banksy and the other street artists and more about Thierry Guetta, the friendly, obsessive, pesky man that shot the documentary. Is he just a pleasantly out-of-sync filmmaker wannabe? Could he be a co-conspirator in the making? Or is he the patsy of street artists making a statement about the mainstream art world and gullible art collectors in particular? Damned if I know, but I like thinking about the questions, along with many others raised by the movie. 86 minutes. At the IMA Toby Theater, part of the Oscar Nominees at The Toby series, Feb. 26 at 5 p.m.; \$9 public / \$5 IMA members.

MEMENTO (R) ★★★★☆

In Christopher Nolan's trailblazing first film, Guy Pearce plays Leonard Shelby, a man determined to avenge his wife's murder, despite the fact that he suffers from complete short-term memory loss. Only by taking copious notes, tattooing clues onto his body, and snapping a Polaroid of every person he meets is Leonard able to keep track of the day's events. But his system is flawed in that it can be corrupted. *Memento* is arguably one of the most original and innovative films ever made, but it has the soul of an old school noir classic. Premieres at the IMA Feb 25, at 7:00 p.m. the last feature in this year's Winter Nights Film Series. \$9 public / \$5 IMA members. — Derrick Carnes

WASTE LAND (NR) ★★★★★

This profound documentary, about the people who work in the largest landfill in the world, functions on numerous levels: as a social justice film about the ability of people in poverty to rise above their condition; as an exploration into the transformative power of art; and as a probing portrait into the passion and process of one of the world's most successful artists. It portrays the mesmerizing journey of renowned photographer Vic Muniz, whose project takes him to his native Brazil, to create art of — and with — the "pickers" in this landfill. You won't think about trash the same way again. Director: Lucy Walker; 98 min. At the IMA Toby Theater, part of the Oscar Nominees at The Toby series, Saturday, Feb. 26 at 1 p.m.; \$9 public / \$5 IMA members. — Jim Poyser



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Co-founder Christina Marrs is leading the Asylum Street Spankers on this year's "spank you" farewell tour.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Asylum Street Spankers

After 17 years, on farewell tour

BY SCOTT HALL
MUSIC@NUVO.NET

The sluggish economy has taken its toll on many business enterprises, including the Asylum Street Spankers, whose long, strange trip is coming to end this spring.

After 17 years, the old-timey acoustic ensemble from Austin, Texas, is bidding adieu to its fans with *Spanks for Everything! – The Farewell Tour*, coming Saturday to Fountain Square's White Rabbit Cabaret.

"It's a big band, and it's always been a challenge to keep this many people out on the road," says co-founder Christina Marrs, the last original member of a group that has seen roughly 40 individuals cycle through its roster over the years. "When the economy was good, a lot of small businesses invested and expanded, and then all of a sudden it tanked, and we experienced a bit of that too. It's just not a sustainable business model right now."

The Spankers built their following with an engaging mix of traditional blues, jazz and jugband music, vaudevillian theatrics and sometimes-bawdy original tunes. For its first decade, the band eschewed electronic amplification all together, until its crowds and venues grew too big and noisy to conquer

without a PA system.

"It was never our goal, even from the beginning, to be, you know, 'authentic.' We never wanted to sound like a Smithsonian archival recording, or anything," Marrs says. "As time went on, we did embrace about every American musical form that there is, and probably stretched our wings quite a bit. But I'd say that ethic was there from the beginning. We got together and we played what we liked. The instrumentation has been the thing that was consistent throughout."

The current seven-member lineup is Marrs on vocals, guitar, banjo, ukulele, saw and percussion; Nevada Newman, lead guitar and vocals; Charlie King, mandolin, harmonica, dobro and vocals; Morgan Patrick Thompson, string bass; Mark Henne, drums and percussion; Shawn Dean, fiddle; and Trevor Smith, banjo, mandolin, guitar and vocals.

But as Marrs noted, the cost of moving a large ensemble around the country continues to rise. And the onward march of technology threatens once-reliable revenue streams.

"One of the biggest impacts has been this industrywide shift away from people buying music in CD format, which is bread and butter for a touring band like us," Marrs says. "It's probably impacted our business to the tune of about \$100,000 a year, which is a lot of money to suddenly find yourself without."

Over the years, the Spankers cranked out nine full-length albums along with some EPs, DVDs and live sets, and much of that merchandise will still be available for a while on the band's website. Their most recent release, the "agnostic gospel" collection *God's Favorite Band* on Yellow Dog Records, was just nominated in the gospel category for the 10th annual Independent Music Awards.

This week, Marrs says, the band was scheduled to make its final visit to Q95's *The Bob & Tom Show*. The nationally syndicated radio personalities took a liking to the Spankers years ago and significantly boosted the band's notoriety with several on-air spots and heavy rotation of earthy Spankers originals like "The Scrotum Song."

The impact has been doubled-edged, Marrs says. As the Spankers discovered, the *Bob & Tom* audience had expectations different from those of the indie hipsters who initially followed the band.

"I don't want to speak too negatively about *The Bob & Tom Show*, because we certainly sold a lot of records because of them," Marrs says. "It was definitely the only national exposure that this band ever got radio-wise, to have a tune played on a widely syndicated show."

But on the other hand: "For the people who were turned onto us for the first time via Bob and Tom, we represented this one thing, this novelty band, and that's certainly an element of what we do, but it's not all we do. It would seem a shame to me, after all the amazing musicians who have gone through this band and all the musicality of the band and the virtuosity and the talent, to have it all boil down to one lowest-common-denominator song. ... I'd hate to be remembered only as the band that did 'The Scrotum Song.'" ■

ASYLUM STREET SPANKERS
White Rabbit Cabaret, 1116 Prospect St.
Saturday, Feb. 26, 9 p.m.,
\$20 advance (brownpapertickets.com),
\$25 door, 21+

SOUNDCHECK

Wednesday

ROCK

THE PRETTY RECKLESS, RUNNER RUNNER, A THOUSAND HORSES

Earth House, 237 N. East St., 6:30 p.m.
\$13 door, \$38 VIP meet-and-greet (includes T-shirt, early entry, laminate), all-ages
Taylor Momsen came to fame as an actress in *Gossip Girl*, then formed the Reckless in 2009, later adding "The Pretty" to avoid copyright hassles. Momsen plays it mean and in-your-face as a lead vocalist, rasping vocals over heavy alt-rock arrangements that owe inspiration to Hole, Smashing Pumpkins and The White Stripes.

ACOUSTIC

RECON!

Locals Only, 2449 E. 56th St.
9 p.m., \$5 (women free before 10 p.m.), 21+
Audio Recon's weekly showcase, RECON!, goes acoustic Wednesday, welcoming string trio Tonos Triad, earthy singer-songwriter Sarah Grain, experimental emcee Neil Cain and cosmopolitan DJ Kyle Long (on the hand-cranked Victrola, we hope, to keep with the acoustic theme).

Thursday

FOLK

LINDSAY MAC AND THE BOOM BOOMS

Irving Theatre, 5505 E. Washington St.
8 p.m., \$10 advance, \$12 door, 21+
Cello is the new guitar. And let it now be noted that the Cambridge-based Lindsay Mac help forge the way by demonstrating that the cello can be a viable instrument for a solo singer-songwriter. About nine years ago, Lindsay ditched her bow and strapped the cello to her body, with said guitar strap wrapped around the fingerboard. The Boom Booms are Meghan Toohey, Mona Tavakoli, and Dev Ray, whose collective credits include performing with The Weepies and Jason Mraz.

Friday

ROCK

BETA MALE, POP LOLITA, SLOTHPOP, ANDY D

Radio Radio, 1119 E. Prospect St.
9 p.m., \$10 (includes CD), 21+
See cover, pg. 12. Joining Beta Male for the release of their debut full-length are dream-pop band Pop Lolita, reunited for one-off shows after calling it quits in the early '00s; folk-rock outfit Slothpop, playing behind their debut album, released in January; and '80s-inspired emcee Andy D, whose sophomore (and sometimes sophomore) album *Songs in the Key of Magic* will see a national release on Roaring Colonel next month.

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/BLOGS

■ **Shoger:** Third Man to issue We Are Hex 7-inch
■ **Selm:** The Sinking Ship opens, owned by punk rocker

■ **Nichols:** Truth & Salvage Co. concert review; Roots/rock notes; return of The Cars

/PHOTOS

■ **Kagiwada:** Dominique Young Unique at Room 929

/VIDEOS

■ **NUVO's Top Five Concerts** on IMC with Sarah Myer

SOUNDCHECK



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cage the Elephant

ROCK

CAGE THE ELEPHANT, SLEEPER AGENT

The Vogue, 6259 N. College Ave. 9 p.m., sold out (plus applicable fees), 21+ The guys in the Bowling Green, Ky.-born band Cage the Elephant relocated to London once they found that their alt-rock-inspired sound was finding plenty more success on that country's charts than in their homeland. The current tour is in the support of their second album, *Thank You Happy Birthday*, released earlier this year.

FOLK

THE BRAINS BEHIND PA

Earth House, 237 N. East St., 7:30 p.m., \$14, all-ages Roots-rock band The Brains Behind Pa came into being as a duo comprised of bluesman Gordon Bonham and singer-songwriter Bill Price before expanding to a five-piece with traditional rock band elements.

ROOTS

LUCINDA WILLIAMS

Buskirk-Chumley Theatre, 114 E. Kirkwood Ave. Bloomington, 8 p.m., sold out, all-ages The old story on Williams was that she spent way too much time on records. But she picked up her pace significantly during the '00s, and next month will see the release of her first new album of this decade, *Blessed*, just three years after her last one, *Little Honey*, appeared. It addresses some of her same concerns — death, by illness ("Copenhagen," about the sudden passing of her manager) or by suicide ("Seeing Black," about singer-songwriter Vic Chesnutt's departure on Christmas Day 2009), and fractured relationships (album opener "Buttercup"). Williams writes about current events more on *Blessed* than on her other albums, particularly on "Soldier's Song," a ripped-from-the-headlines piece contrasting battlefield violence with domestic routines.

Saturday

ECLECTIC

SIX BANDS FOR SIX BUCKS

Birdy's, 2131 E. 71st St., 7 p.m., \$6, 21+ Well now, there's no beating this value: six bucks buys you six local bands at Birdy's Saturday night. Well, it buys you the right to hear the bands; any transactions that occur in the champagne room or in the alley out back are really up to you and the band. Featuring They've Shot Flanigan, The Colourful, The Fallow, Glass Halo, Tug Fork River Band and Outer Sanctum. Hosted by Ricky Lee Potts.

JAZZ

JAZZ PREMIERE SERIES: JEREMY SISKIND

The Jazz Kitchen, 5377 N. College Ave. 8 p.m., sold out (limited seating on bar stools may be available), 21+ Saturday night, the American Pianists Association holds the last concert in its Jazz Premiere series, part of a seven month-long competition to elect a new Cole Porter Fellow in Jazz. Four finalists have already performed in a trio setting before Jazz Kitchen crowds; Siskind, accompanied by bassist Frank Smith and drummer Kenny Phelps, will wind things up. The winner, to be determined this April, will receive a two-year fellowship worth \$100,000, including \$50,000 in cash.

ROOTS

ASYLUM STREET SPANKERS

White Rabbit Cabaret, 1116 E. Prospect St. 8 p.m., \$20 advance, \$25 door, 21+ See feature, pg. 26.

ROOTS

CASH BASH

Radio Radio, 1119 E. Prospect St., 9 p.m., \$10 advance (brownpapertickets.com), \$12 door, 21+ Mandy Marie and the Cool Hand Lukes, who went on hiatus last year when bandleader Mandy Marie Luke moved to Austin, will reunite for the Cash Bash, an annual celebration of all things Johnny Cash held at Indy's home for all things rockabilly, Radio Radio.

Tuesday

ROCK

PETE YORN, BEN KWELLER

The Vogue, 6259 N. College Ave. 8 p.m., \$27 (plus applicable fees), 21 Black Francis, the fellow behind the Pixies, produced Pete Yorn's latest record, his eponymous fifth release. And it's a pretty happy pairing — Yorn sounds like he could've fit right into the Pixies way back when, and Francis gives Yorn's often lightweight sounds some necessary ballast. A singer-songwriter who was recognized by *Billboard* for his work before age 10 (by way of an honorable mention for his submission to the magazine's annual songwriting competition), Ben Kweller has led a charmed early musical life. He signed with a major label when he was 15, and was resilient enough to recover from being dropped from that label to try something new — namely, country music, which he embraced on his most recent full-length, *Changing Horses*. ■



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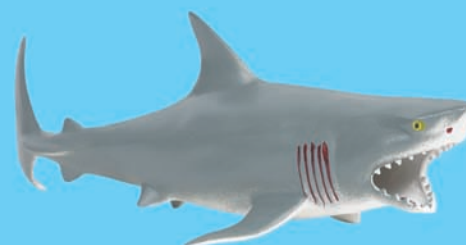
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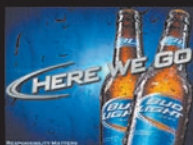


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music

what you missed...



PHOTO BY STACY KAGIWADA

Tampa-based emcee Dominique Young Unique performs Friday night at the Ripple Inn's Room 929, backed by DJ Indiana Jones on the turntables.

REVIEW

SATURDAY
THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER, JOHN PIZZARELLI
Clowes Hall, Feb. 19

You have to be in a certain mood to appreciate the light after-hours jazz of John Pizzarelli and the pop-styled jazz fusion of the Manhattan Transfer. But it's one worth getting into.

John Pizzarelli, a self-styled "21st century version" of Nat King Cole, opened a Saturday night show at Clowes with the Transfer, singing and comping guitar at the head of a tight rhythm quartet. His jazz was as light as it was light-hearted. Given Pizzarelli's soloing technique (technically simple, full of repeated phrases) and his hollow-body guitar tone, I was reminded of Chuck Berry — and like Berry, he won over the audience with his too-cool personality. The more gimmicky Pizzarelli got, the more the crowd ate it up, and they exploded the first time he accompanied his own guitar solo with an identical line of scat vocals.

With Pizzarelli's group mainly playing standards, some songs seemed inappropriate. "Solitude" was played too casually, considering that Duke had intended it for the anguished voice of Lady Day. But on the whole, Pizzarelli's signature light style served as a perfect hors d'oeuvre to the Manhattan Transfer.

The sound of the Transfer, a four-part a cappella act backed by rock instruments, can be best described as jazz-pop fusion. They opened with an R&B-infused version of Chick Corea's "Spain" for which they had just written lyrics in the Vocalese style. The song was all the more fun for those who were familiar with the original, instrumental track, with the Transfer transforming an innocent Corea piano line into "The sound of our hearts beat like castanets." In the same vein, they closed with their Grammy-winning version of Weather Report's "Birdland," in which all instrumental parts — harmonic and melodic — were put to words.

The set wasn't purely jazz fusion. The high point was when each of the four performed a solo number to promote their own newly released 'tribute' records. Particularly strong was Cheryl Bentyne's tribute to Gershwin.

The night opened light and finished heavy, yet there was nothing jarring about the pairing of John Pizzarelli and the Manhattan Transfer. Both proved there can be nothing cooler than singing jazz.

-JOE WILLIAMS
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JAZZ NOTES

by Chuck Workman, the producer/host of the *Saturday Evening Jazz Show* from 6 to 8 p.m. on 88.7 WICR FM



Jazz at the Post

American Legion Post 249 is taking a proactive role in supporting young local jazz musicians this year. Jerry Smith, the second vice officer of Post 249, 2523 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., explains: "We have instituted a jazz workshop featuring some of Indianapolis's finest jazz musicians and clinicians. The participating musicians invite all of our young aspiring musicians, 18 and up, as well as seasoned veterans. We would like to create an atmosphere reminiscent of Indy's old club jam sessions, which were the training ground for many that reached national stardom and fame."

Rudolph Finnell, a retired music director at Broad Ripple High School who was inducted into the Indianapolis Jazz Hall of Fame in 2010, co-founded the Jazz Workshop with Smith. I asked Finnell about the cost for those attending the Jazz Workshop. "There is no cost to those aspiring jazz musicians," he told me. "It's free to them."

Jazz Workshops take place the second Saturday of each month from 3 to 7 p.m. in the Robert C. Collins Hall of the post. A live jam session performance follows each workshop. Scheduled performers for the jam session include the Gary Walters Ensemble (March 12), Clifford Ratliff & The Indy Jazz Co. (April 9), Indy Jazz Men (May 14) and the John Harden Project (June 11). All sessions are free and open to the public.

New venues

New jazz venues have popped up on the near northside in recent weeks.

Sahm's Tavern, located on the ground floor of the Gibson Building at the corner of Capitol Avenue and Michigan Street, now features the Bill Lancton Quartet on the first and third Fridays of the month from 8 to 11 p.m. Bluesman Gordon Bonham is holding down second and fourth Fridays. There is a five dollar cover charge.

The Bar at the Ambassador, located at the intersection of 9th Street and Pennsylvania Ave., is now hosting jazz groups on Saturdays from 8 to 11 p.m. to complement its Cajun and Creole dining menu. There is no cover charge.

Jimmy McDaniels exhibit

A national traveling exhibition on the life of musician/humanitarian/educator Jimmy McDaniels is on display at the Crispus Attucks Museum, 1140 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., until February 28. McDaniels was inducted into the Indianapolis Jazz Foundation's Jazz Hall of Fame during its inaugural year of 1998 and into the national Jazz Hall of Fame in 1984. He was a driving force on the Indianapolis jazz scene from 1977 into the '90s.

The exhibition, titled "The Leader of the Band," is coordinated by the Jimmy McDaniel's Foundation Inc., a national non-profit organization. The foundation's mission is to provide higher educational opportunities for minority instrumentalists in Indianapolis and Birmingham, Ala. Admission is free to the public, with donations accepted for jazz scholarships at Butler University.

BARFLY by Wayne Bertsch



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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Barbershop eargasms

Plus, a male support group that encourages weeping

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

The ear has a "G-spot," explained the Santa Clara, Calif., ear-nose-and-throat surgeon, and thus the moans of ecstasy that Vietnamese "ear pickers" reportedly elicit from their clients might well be justified. A *San Jose Mercury News* reporter, dispatched to Ho Chi Minh City in January to check it out, learned that barbershop technicians could sometimes coax "eargasms" (as they removed wax) by tickling a certain spot next to the ear drum served by multiple nerve endings and paper-thin skin. Said one female client, "Everybody is afraid the first time, but after, it's, 'Oh my God!'" Said one Vietnamese man, returning home after a trip abroad, and who went immediately from the airport to a "hot toc" parlor for a picking, "(This) brings a lot of happiness."

The continuing crisis

• Two San Francisco-area counselors recently formed Men of Tears — a male support group to encourage crying, according to a January *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter, who observed as nine men recounted touching events in their lives, accompanied by tears that, according to the counselors, make them emotionally stronger and less hostile. One of the counselors praised the recent public cries by Speaker of the House John Boehner and hoped that President Obama (who stopped just short of tears at the memorial service for

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

victims of the recent Tucson, Ariz., shootings) would someday step over that line.

- Disabled wheelchair user Jim Starr, 36, of Dorchester, England, was recently ordered off of public roads because his "chair" is too big. Authorities told him that his custom-made, motorized chair with caterpillar treads instead of wheels, which moves like a tank, would have to be licensed like one ("Category H" vehicle, one category higher than a "road roller"). Starr said his chair was the only way he could play at the beach with his kids.

- Beloved Banker: (1) In December, J.P. Morgan Chase abruptly ended a program that had allowed military personnel to defer paying on Chase-owned student loans while on active duty. (2) Three weeks later, NBC News reported that Chase's mortgage division had long been ignoring a federal military protection law by charging 4,000 active-duty personnel higher mortgage-interest rates than permitted (and improperly foreclosing on 14 of them). (3) That same week, Chase was found to be advertising (through an agent) a foreclosed-on, 5-year-old house in Rexburg, Idaho, without adequate notice that it was infested with "thousands" of garter snakes. (In February, Chase reinstated the student-loan deferments and apologized for ignoring the federal law.)

Oops!

- Three men visiting Philadelphia in December were charged with a several-store robbery spree, and perhaps luckily for them, they were quickly arrested. The police report noted that one of the victims (who had a gun waved in her face) was Terri Staino, 38, the owner of John Anthony Hair Styling for Men, who is also the husband of Anthony Staino — reputed to be the No. 2 man in the South Philadelphia mob, according to the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

- Alex Good, 15, practicing tee shots with his high school golf team on a rainy day underneath a golf course awning, had one of his drives hit the metal pole holding the awning up, causing the ball to ricochet into his eye, resulting in likely permanent damage. Despite the fact that the pole was directly in front of the tee, inches away, Good nonetheless charged the Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club (Hillsboro, Ore.) with negligence and filed a \$3 million lawsuit in January.

- How Not to Do a Laser Bronchoscopy: First, according to a case written up in December in the Massachusetts Medical Law Report, do not let the laser set fire to the patient's throat. More importantly, if a spark does ignite, do not use the everyday home remedy for a small flame, i.e., try to blow it out — because blowing down the

"trach" tube might actually extend the fire, as it did here. (The surgeon and hospital were not named; the lawsuit resulting from the patient's death was settled out of court.)

Bright ideas

- Edward Hall III, 24, a Columbia University researcher, was arrested in January for trespassing at JFK airport in New York City after he disobeyed United Airlines personnel and tried an alternative method to board a plane. He told ticket agents he badly needed to be on the flight to San Francisco even though he had forgotten to bring a photo ID. Frustrated, Hall stepped behind the counter and crawled onto the luggage conveyor, where his next stop, minutes later, was the tarmac where bags were being loaded and where he was arrested.

- A suburban Chicago high school health-class instructor's technique for teaching the names of female reproductive parts caught the ire of the Illinois Family Institute religious organization in January. To some of the kids, teacher Jacquelyn Levin's "game" was nothing more than a mnemonic to facilitate memorizing the anatomy, but others told the institute that Levin's play on words was chantable, could be set to the tune of the "Hokey Pokey," and was referred to by several students as "the vagina dance." Said a complaining parent, "It is disrespectful to women and removes modesty about the reproductive parts."

Least competent criminals

- Failed to Think It Through: (1) Kyle Eckman, 22, was charged with theft in Lancaster, Pa., in November after he was stopped leaving a Kohl's department store, mostly still in his own clothes but also wearing the pair of Elle high-heel shoes he was allegedly trying to shoplift. (2) Jimmy Honeycutt, 27, was arrested in Pawtucket, R.I., in October and charged with five recent robberies of liquor stores. Among the items found on Honeycutt was a telephone directory listing of liquor stores, with the ones recently robbed marked off.

- Recurring Themes: (1) At a traffic stop, once again a passenger climbed into the driver's seat as the officer approached, trying to save a drug-impaired driver from a citation. However, once again it turned out that the passenger was just as drug-impaired as the driver, and both were cited (Gastonia, N.C., December). (2) Once again a woman tried to conceal drugs by stuffing them down her pants into her



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most private area, and once again, when police found them, the woman immediately denied that the pills were hers (Manatee, Fla., December).

Undignified deaths

- (1) A 26-year-old man died in Chattanooga, Tenn., in January after being accidentally bitten by a copperhead snake. According to police, a friend had caught the snake and taken it to the man's house because, for some reason, he wanted the man to ascertain the snake's gender. (2) A 21-year-old man was stabbed to death at a party in Bristol, Conn., in January (and three others wounded), apparently because they had been making derisive comments about another man's flatulence. The allegedly gaseous Marc Higgins, 21, was charged with the crimes.

A News of the Weird Classic (April 2008)

- Irish director-playwright Paul Walker's production of "Ladies & Gents" opened for a March (2008) run in New York City 29 blocks north of Broadway, in a public restroom. According to an Associated Press report, the entire play takes place among the porcelain in a bathroom in Central Park, portraying "the seedy underside of 1950s Dublin," with the audience of 25 standing beside rows of stalls, near "spiders, foul odors and puddles of questionable origin." Walker proudly admits that he wanted to take his audience "out of their comfort zone." Actor John O'Callaghan recalled that rehearsals were especially difficult: "One man actually came in and had a pee right in front of us."



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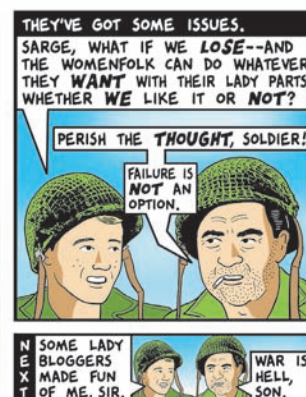
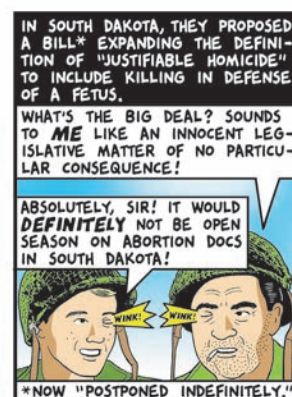
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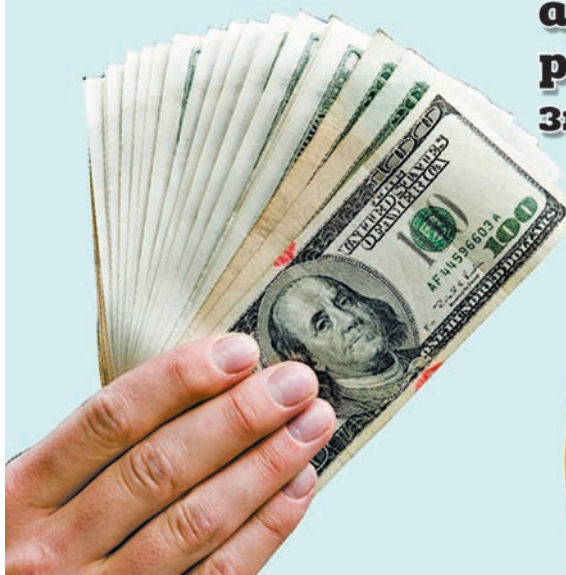
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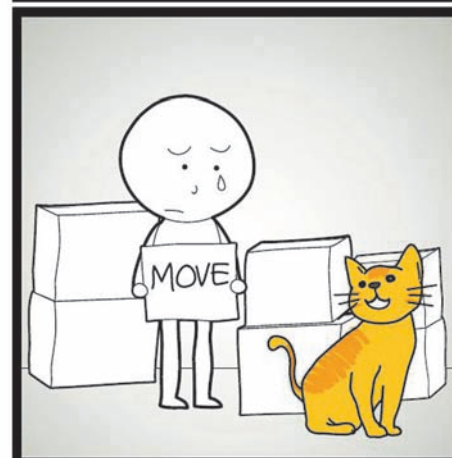
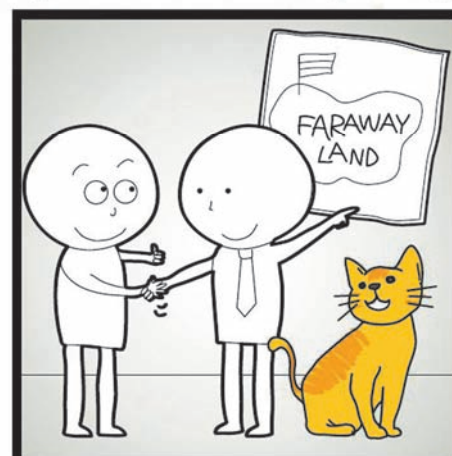
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♈ **ARIES (March 21-April 19):** “Newspapers are unable, seemingly, to discriminate between a bicycle accident and the collapse of civilization,” said George Bernard Shaw more than six decades ago — and it’s still true. It’s very important that you be more discerning than newspapers in the coming weeks, Aries. You can’t afford to confuse a minor mess with a major snafu; it would be a big mistake to treat a small temporary detour as a permanent loss of momentum. Please keep your melodramatic tendencies in check, even as you appreciate the entertainment value of your ever-shifting story.

♉ **TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** I know many Tauruses who are skilled at selling products and services, but less adept at presenting themselves. They don’t mind being pushy and strategic when it comes to shaping the opinions of others, as long as they can remain a bit shy about showing others exactly who they are. If this is true about you, I propose that you work on changing it. The coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to be bold about expressing the totality of your beauty and making sure that everyone who matters to you gets to see it in its full glory.

♊ **GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** You’re not scared of acquiring more clout and luster, right? You won’t get nervous if you suddenly have to deal with more success than usual, right? You won’t run away if a power spot you’ve been cultivating for yourself finally starts providing you with the opportunities and responsibilities you’d been hoping for, right? I just hope you’re ready to handle the good stuff that’s available, Gemini. Please don’t confuse this enjoyable stress with the other kind.

♋ **CANCER (June 21-July 22):** In her essay “The Possible Human,” Jean Houston describes amazing capacities that are within reach of any of us who are brazen and cagey enough to cultivate them. We can learn to thoroughly enjoy being in our bodies, for example. We can summon enormous power to heal ourselves; develop an acute memory; enter at will into the alpha and theta wave states that encourage meditation and creative reverie; cultivate an acute perceptual apparatus that can see “infinity in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower;” and practice the art of being deeply empathetic. Guess what, Cancerian: The next six months will be one of the best times ever for you to work on developing these superpowers. To get started, answer this question: Is there any attitude or belief you have that might be standing in the way? (Here’s Houston’s essay: tinyurl.com/PossibleHuman.)

♌ **LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** The depths are calling to you, Leo. Can you hear their subtle melodies? Don’t worry: I’m not referring to the icky, stinky, creepy depths; I don’t mean that you’ll have to lose yourself in a chaotic miasma, or wander speechless in a claustrophobic maze. No: The deep place I’m talking about is maybe the cleanest, most well-lit abyss you’ve ever had the complicated pleasure to explore. I’m not saying there’ll be no hairy riddles to deal with; but I am saying that even the hairy riddles will be interesting, at least a little fun, and helpful in your efforts to purify yourself.

♍ **VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** I’m no fan of the climate change that’s rocking every corner of the planet. In fact, I oppose it; I protest it; I resist it. However, I do need to acknowledge that there is at least one upside: The world is becoming more fragrant. Scientists say that as carbon dioxide levels rise, plants will release more aromatic chemicals known as “biogenic volatile organic compounds.” The smell of growing vegetation could intensify by as much as 40 percent in the coming decades. This situation is not a precise metaphorical match for your upcoming destiny, Virgo, but I do see some similarities. Things are going to be getting hotter for you, emotionally speaking — and that will be stimulating, often even pleasurable, to your senses.

♎ **LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** An interviewer asked me, “What is the most difficult aspect of what you do?” Here’s what I said: “Not repeating myself is the hardest thing. And yet it’s also a lot of fun. There’s nothing more exciting for me than to keep being surprised by what I write. It’s deeply enjoyable to be able to feed people clues they haven’t heard from me before. And when I focus on doing what gives me pleasure, the horoscopes write themselves.” I hope this testimony helps you in your own life right now, Libra. If you’re afraid that you’re in danger of repeating yourself, start playing more. Look for what amuses you, for what scrambles your expectations in entertaining ways. Decide that you’re going to put the emphasis on provoking delight in yourself, not preserving your image.

♏ **SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** I am a big fan of your analytical intellect, and would never advise you to shove it out of the way so that your emotional intelligence can rule uncontested. But this is one time when I think the latter needs to get more say than the former; your emotional intelligence has license to take precedence over your analytical intellect. In that light, please consider the following counsel from my Facebook friend Sophia Veleda: “I do not consider emotions to be the dirty redheaded stepchild of the frontal cortex. Our emotional selves are more intuitive, faster, smarter (by means of being able to take in more data at once), and just as capable. The frontal cortex is as likely to make errors due to data omission as the emotional center is likely to get a degree of magnitude wrong.”

♐ **SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** There are thousand of things in the world that provide you with only mediocre nourishment; the influences that deeply enrich you with their blessings are much smaller in number. To say it another way: You derive a bare amount of inspiration and teaching from the great majority of people, songs, images, words, stories, environments, and sights; whereas you draw life-sustaining illumination and spirit-ennobling motivation from just a precious few. Your task in the coming weeks, Sagittarius, is to identify that special minority, and to take aggressive steps to be in more ongoing communion with it.

♑ **CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Research suggests that more and more American high school students are getting good grades every year. The number of A’s doled out has been going up steadily. Does that mean kids are getting smarter or that teachers have relaxed their standards? I don’t have a definitive answer for that. But I do have a theory that all over the world, the Capricorn tribe has been growing more intelligent in recent years. Your increase in 2010 was especially notable. There may have been a bit of tapering off lately, but I expect that to change soon. The omens say you’re due for another growth spurt in your ability to understand how the world works.

♒ **AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Is there anything you tend to hoard, Aquarius? Anything you store up in excessive amounts? Are there emotions you cling to past the time they’re doing you any good? Do you notice yourself feeling pangs of acquisitiveness when in the presence of particular treasures or symbols or pretty things? If so, this is an excellent time to work on dissipating those fixations. In the coming days, you will have cosmic assistance whenever you exert your willpower to undo your fanatical attachments to just about anything.

♓ **PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** I’m hoping that you will grant your ego more permission to shine in the coming weeks, Pisces. I’m hoping you will allow it to unveil more flash, feel more zeal, and exert more force. After all your earnest bouts of self-sacrifice, you deserve a poetic license to brag like a hip-hop millionaire. After putting in such tireless devotion to maintaining an oceanic sense of self, you have every right to bust out a crisp, ferocious blast of “I am!”

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